

この素晴らしい世界に祝福を!
スピノオフ

暁 なつめ
illustration
三嶋くろね

素晴らしい世界に

爆炎相を!
3!
バーバの
ふたりは
最強!



素晴らしい世界に

爆焰

を!

たりは最強!

のアーハ

——我が名はめぐみん！アークウェイザードを生業とし、
最強の攻撃魔法、爆裂魔法を操りし者……！

めぐみん

セシリーお姉ちゃん、
お小遣いちょうどいい！

今後もちよくちよくこの爆発が
起くるかと思いますが、どうぞ、よろしく……

我が名はゆんゆん!
アークウェイザードにして中級魔法を
操りし者、やがては紅魔族の長となる者!

いつもそうよねめぐみんは！
どこが紅魔族随一の天才なのよ、
大事な事は何一つ覚えられない
アホの子じやない！

ほら、野菜ステーキがあるよー。おいで、おいでー



火 ホースト 火

どうも、通りすがりの大魔法使いです。
この私を仲間はずれにして、
また随分と盛り上がってますね

……お前がアイツをやつたのか。
なるほどなあ

……めぐみん?

この素晴らしい世界に爆炎を!

3

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口絵・本文イラスト／三嶋くろね
口絵・本文デザイン／百足屋ユウコ+ナカムラナナフシ
(ムシカゴグラフィクス)

PROLOGUE - THE STRONGEST PAIR'S TURN!

ブローグ



A male scolding voice was heard from afar.

I closed my eyes and thought about my current situation.

—This was the City of Rookie Adventurers, Axel.

It was known as “The City of Beginnings”, a place where low level adventurers could find party members.

That's right.

We left the Home of Crimson Magic on a trip to reach here, and protected a caravan along the way.

The reward was a stay in this hotel—

“If I knew it would be like this, I wouldn't have come to this parallel world! Restart! I want a restart!”

As I reminisced, a complaining voice shouted again.

...Parallel world?

Was someone drunk downstairs?

“I'm the one who wants a restart, you shut-in! If I had to come no matter what, I'd want a handsome hero to pamper me! Who wants to come with a useless bean sprout like you!”

“You bitch!”

What were they arguing about?

I got out of bed and opened the window. An eye-catching sunset dyed the sky of Axel red.

On the streets, there were a group of adventurers who were

returning after completing a quest. They smiled in satisfaction even though they looked somewhat tired.

These adventurers were not well-equipped. They didn't even have someone in proper armor.

It was a small party that was badly balanced as its members consisted of vanguards and rear guards.

One couldn't blame them.

This was the City of Rookie Adventurers after all.

For me, this city was the starting point. I was merely passing through.

I should be staying here only for a short while.

I held on to the window frame and looked out at the golden-haired adventurer who seemed to be returning after completing a mission. That person said happily to the companions behind.

“Hey, we defeated more than expected today. Let's be extravagant?”

“Great! I want Warm Grandma Green Neroid and grass jelly slime set meal!”

TL Note: ネロイド. This should mean “fluid”, as in Aneroid (non-fluid) Barometer. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pressure_measurement#Aneroid and <https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%82%A2%E3%83%8D%E3%83%AD%E3%82%A4%E3%83%89%E6%B0%97%E5%9C%A7%E8%A8%88>.

“Yahoo! I want ice-cold beer and fried frog nuggets set meal!”

“Hey, hey. Even if you want to be extravagant, you should

upgrade your equipment first... Sigh. Never mind, it's fine once in a while... I also want ice cold beer and fried frog nuggets set meal!"

.....As an arch wizard, I expected to perform and become famous worldwide. Although I did not intend to stay in this Rookie City for long...

"Rin! Keith! Taylor! We must drink our fill this time!"

Note: If you don't remember them, they are the adventurers in Volume 2 of the main series.

The adventurers in this city seemed very happy—

CHAPTER 1 - ADVENTURERS OF ROOKIE'S CITY

第一章

魔力出で街の冒險者アカウトロード



PART 1

After defeating Anis, the stalker who was after Chomsuke, we received some monetary reward from the caravan leader as well as an arrangement to stay in this high class hotel.

“—Hey, stop joking! As a modern man, how can I sleep in a stable!?”

Upon arrival in this city, I slept like a log and woke up to the sound of argument downstairs.

The room arranged for me by the caravan leader was deep inside on the second floor.

The argumentative noises came from downstairs again.

“I don’t want to sleep in a stable either! But we have no money, so it can’t be helped!”

It seemed to be an argument between people who couldn’t endure living in a stable.

They must be rookie adventurers new to this city.

I rubbed my sleepy eyes and stretched my back on the bed.

The sky was darkening, so it should be around evening time.

“This is different from what I expect from an adventurer’s life! An adventurer should make a lot of money, then live in the best room, and drink until he’s drunk for the next two days!”

“What are you telling me for! Only 1,000 eris was left out of the money I received from that Eris Cult uncle. We’ll use this

money for dinner, then quickly get to sleep!"

"Da-Damn it! I didn't come here to live like this!"

I listened to the noises and walked to the neighboring room where Yunyun stayed.

—Axel, the city where rookie adventurers gathered.

This was the city that every adventurer would visit at least once.

"Yunyun, are you awake? Some noisy adventurers out of nowhere woke me up. Want to have dinner on the first floor?"

After knocking on the neighboring door, sleepy-eyed Yunyun opened the door.

"If you still want to sleep, you don't have to force yourself to come, okay?"

".....I want to go. After all, it's rare for me to be invited to dinner."

.....

After Yunyun made such a sad statement, we walked down the stairs.

Most hotels utilized the first floor as a tavern and a pub.

Perhaps because it was dinner time, the pub was very crowded. We found an empty spot and ordered this city's specialty, fried frog set meal.

I ate the set meal and asked Yunyun about our future plans.

"Okay. Although we had a lot of incidents today, we are

currently in an unfamiliar city. We have no time to casually get into the right mood. Let's set our itinerary for tomorrow."

"That's true. We need to take on quests to cover the cost of living. So we must recruit companions."

Recruit companions, huh.

Then we should visit the Adventurer's Guild in this city.

Yunyun also intend to recruit companions? I can't move after using Explosion magic, so I have no choice but to be in a party. But Yunyun can probably clear simple quests alone, right?"

"It's discomforting to be mobbed by monsters, and I want adventuring companions too. We can live and eat together in this hotel. After finishing a big quest, we can cheer and drink in the pub... Eh. I left the village merely to go with the flow of things, but this is unexpectedly good..."

Yunyun mumbled as she used her fork on the fried frog.

"In that case, we will find companions tomorrow. The Adventurer's Guild should have a notice board for party recruitment. We'll take a look there, and ask how to take on quests."

I left behind Yunyun whose eyes were sparkling dreamily, and gathered information from the other customers in the pub.

There was another mission I must complete in this city.

"—Excuse me. May I have a moment of your time?"

"Oh, what is it, little girl? Why are you in this place at this time?"

“Your mother will be worried. You should go home early.”

I approached two uncles at a nearby table and was treated as a kid.

“No. I’m an adventurer who takes on a role alone. Look at this, if you don’t believe me!”

I was a bit frustrated at being treated like a kid, so I pushed my Adventurer’s Card in his face.

“So-Sorry, I was wrong! So, what’s the matter, little girl?”

“There is something I’d like to ask. I heard that in this city, there is a wizard who can use Explosion magic.”

“Explosion magic?” X2

Perhaps they did not understand the arcane jargon, both of them looked doubtful.

“That’s the strongest offensive magic. I heard there is a pretty and powerful wizard with big breasts in this city...”

“A pretty and powerful wizard with big breasts... Ah, that should be the shop owner!”

“That’s right. It should be that poor shop owner!”

“Po-Poor shop owner?”

I received an unexpected answer.

“She is the famous owner of a magic item shop in this city.”

“Ah. She used to be an adventurer. She is a very powerful wizard.”

A powerful wizard who was a former adventurer.

Was she the person I was looking for?

But I was a bit bothered by the description of her being “poor”.

She was a serious and reliable person, yet her business sense was terrible?

I asked for the shop address and engraved it in my mind.

Once I knew the address, I could find her anytime.

Although I wanted to let her witness my growth immediately...

“.....Well, that can wait after I have become an adventurer in this city.”

I was a bit timid when it was time to actually meet her.

PART 2

“Okay, Yunyun, let’s go! Be enthusiastic!”

“I-I know, but why are you so excited early in the morning!?”

We didn’t even do any research on this city, going directly to the Adventurer’s Guild early in the morning.

“What are you saying? Our anticipated lives as adventurers are starting today! Battling unknown, powerful enemies in a bloody carnage! Blowing away monsters with my Explosion magic! I’m nearly bursting just thinking about it! How can I not be excited!?”

Facing me as I excitedly waved my staff in the streets,

“I-I know! I know, so keep your voice down!”

Yunyun said in embarrassment as she looked around.

As it was still early, there were few people in the streets.

We came early to the Adventurer’s Guild to find companions.

Before the doors, the future hero candidates were ready to make trouble.

I stopped before the door and said to Yunyun, who was panting.

“Yunyun, listen. The first impression is very important. The Adventurer’s Guild is full of rude people, who will look down on young rookies like us. Once the door is opened, loudly declare your name! Crimson Magic Clan must not be

underestimated!"

"Ahahah... I hope scary people won't find us, I hope they won't find us..."

I opened the door and flicked my cloak, declaring loudly!

"My name is Megumin! The top wizard of Crimson Magic Clan, who specializes in Explosion... magic..."

There was nobody there.

"Ho-How embarrassing...!!"

Yunyun blushed and shivered behind me as she hugged Chomsuke.

Hearing this, my face reddened somewhat.

"Coming... Ah, what is it early in the morning?"

An elder sister came forward from deep inside the seemingly empty guild. She looked a guild staff.

I looked at the guild again. Forget about adventurers who are taking on jobs, there wasn't even any normal customers in the tavern.

I readjusted my mindset and approached the elder sister at the counter.

"Goo-Good morning. I'm Megumin, an arch wizard. This is my first time being an adventurer, so I don't know what to do..."

"Ah, your eyes. You must belong to Crimson Magic Clan, right? I see. If I remember correctly, Crimson Magic Clansmen receive their Adventurer's Cards in school. Then, do you have your card? I need to examine it before you can take on

quests, checking for issues like criminal records..."

"Sorry, can the card examination be done later? I preferred it to be when there are more adventurers around."

"? Sure..."

I left the bewildered elder sister and sat at a nearby table.

"Megumin, aren't you submitting your card? If not, I will do it first."

"No problem. I'll do it when there are more people around."

Yunyun looked confused and handed her card to the receptionist.

"Let me see... Eh! Th-That's Crimson Magic Clan for you! This is my first time seeing someone with this much magic power!"

"Th-Thanks..."

I listened to their conversations and smiled, waiting for people to arrive.

PART 3

The guild eventually became crowded. Some people were eating at the tavern, while others were looking at the notice board for jobs.

I listened to the din typical of a tavern and said to myself.

“...It’s almost time.”

Yunyun, who was eating noodles, lifted her head to look at me as I stood up.

“I say, why did you wait until it gets crowded to submit your card? It was empty earlier...”

I said, “I’ll be right back” to Yunyun, who didn’t understand anything. I walked over to the receptionist.

By the way, there was a convention for choosing the receptionist.

I must choose the most beautiful receptionist.

This type of receptionist usually had a shocking background, such as being the guild’s poster girl or a powerful ex-adventurer.

I learnt this in school. It was common knowledge as an adventurer.

“Next... Oh, you are a Crimson Magic Clansman?”

A beautiful receptionist with big breasts and wavy hair said as she looked at my eyes.

“As you can see, I’m a Crimson Magic Clansman. From today onwards, I intend to use this city as a base, so I’m here to submit my Adventurer’s Card for examination.”

“I see. Let me take a look... Thi-This is!? Awesome, that’s Crimson Magic Clan for you. Your intelligence and magic power stats are so high...!”

The receptionist said in shock, and the adventurers took notice of the disturbance.

This was it. This was what I wanted. A receptionist who was shocked by my stats and thus made the other adventurers take notice!

This way, I wouldn’t be underestimated by the adventurers in this city...

“Your magic power is not as high as the person who came yesterday, but it is still quite high... Good. No criminal record. The card is genuine. You may take on quests now.”

.....Eh?

“Sorry, wait a moment. Not as high as the person who came yesterday? That means, there is someone who have even more magic power than me?”

“Yes. It was someone who registered as an adventurer yesterday... Because her intelligence is too low, she couldn’t become a wizard. I think she took the job of an arch priest.”

Arch priest?

“Oh, that person yesterday, right?”

“It should be her.”

“She’s indeed beautiful, but she... said something about being a goddess.”

“If only she isn’t an Axis Cultist. And if she doesn’t say such weird things, I would have invited her...”

“She shouted out such weird things precisely because she’s an Axis Cultist.”

The adventurers started talking among themselves after hearing the receptionist.

What was that about?

Was it about that arch priest?

Anyway, if she became an arch priest, she wouldn’t be an obstacle to my goal of becoming the most powerful arch wizard. So whatever.

More importantly...

“You! Are you free? Do you have adventuring companions in this city?”

“Hey, wait! That’s too cunning! I was here first!”

“My party has two members with advanced jobs! How about it!?”

Hearing my conversation with the receptionist, the other adventurers rushed over to invite me.

PART 4

—At a corner of the tavern, I listened to a guy and a girl introduced themselves.

“I’m the fighter, Reinis. This is the thief, Reiner. Please to meet you!”

“I’m Megumin. Please to meet you.”

“.....Is that your real name?” X2

“It’s my real name. If you have any comments about my name, let’s hear it.”

“N-No! No comments! Right, it’s Crimson Magic Clan after all...”

Ugh, hm. I feel it’s a nice name!”

They said in panic.

I chose to join this brother-and-sister team.

A normal adventuring party composed of four to six members.

I joined this small party because a small party meant a larger share of the reward.

As I currently only have the cash reward from the caravan, I must make some money.

Somewhat concerned, I looked over to the other table and noticed Yunyun looking around suspiciously.

She raised her hand and whispered “Uh...”, but nobody heard her in the din.

This was a good opportunity for Yunyun to improve her social skills. I shouldn't intervene to help her. Let her resolve it herself.

“What is it? Is there another adventurer you want?”

“Including yourself, we are only three. It's okay to recruit more members.”

“No, nothing. Let's find a punitive expedition quest. Let's finish one quest to test our compatibility. This would be a probation period.”

They didn't have any objections.

In the distance, after being lost for a while, Yunyun took some paper from the receptionist and started writing something.

It seemed she gave up on asking for an invite and decided to make her own party to recruit members.

“There's a punitive expedition quest for squirrels. Megumin, how about this?”

“In this season, the squirrels must have fattened. They should be delicious.”

What was a squirrel?

They said it was delicious when it became fat, so it must be an edible monster.

Now was the time for appetite. It was the season for chestnuts.

This monster's name was tempting.

"Let's do it then!"

As this was my first quest, I nodded my head excitedly.

PART 5

Squirrel.

It loved to eat chestnuts and its meat was tender and tasty.

About the size of a dog, the squirrels would agilely invade the agricultural regions of the city and ruin the farmers' harvests.

“Megumin, Megumin! A lot of them are coming! They’re coming, coming! Please wipe them out with magic! Reiner, support Megumin. Don’t let the squirrels get close to her!”

“Brother, be careful! There’s one coming out of the shadows!”

“Ugh! That was close...!”

A metallic noise rang out from Reinis’ shield.

He used the shield to block the squirrel’s attack.

“Leave it to me. I can clear them all with one hit! Just give me some time!”

“Are you sure!? There are more than 20 of them!? Anyway, please hurry!”

“Brother, in front. In front of you!”

Reiner shouted as she slashed at the squirrels. Reinis raised his shield hurriedly.

A metallic sound rang out once more. The squirrel’s barb scrapped against the shield.

With a cute name like squirrel, these monsters have barbs covering their bodies.

A person without metal armor would be heavily injured if subject to such attacks.

Reiner tossed her daggers at the squirrels, while Reinis forced himself to take the blows.

With no margin for failure, sweat flowed down my nervous face.

I completed my magic incantation, raised my staff, and shouted at them.

“Both of you, pull back from the enemies! I’m going to blast the center of the monster mob!”

“Understood!” X2

Both of them pulled back from the squirrels.

At the same time, I chanted!

“Explosion—!”

A beam of light shone from the tip of the staff straight into the mob of squirrels.

The target glowed white as light and heat expanded with the magic.

With an explosive noise in the agricultural district, my magic blew the squirrels away with no quarters given.

The power of Explosion magic did not stop there. Even the chestnut trees, which the squirrels feed on, were uprooted. Reinis and Reiner were rolling on the ground.

Along with the two of them shouting pitifully on the ground, I was blown off my feet by the magic shockwave. I enjoyed the sense of accomplishment of having cleared so many monsters in one move.

.....But next time, I should keep in mind the area affected by the shockwave of my own magic.

“Ah... Wh-What...”

“What is this!”

Reiner and Reinis stood up and cried out upon seeing the surrounding.

“Ha. Once I make my move, the squirrels’ fates are as you can see! The magic earlier is my finishing move, the ultimate offensive magic, Explosion magic!”

“Ex-Explosion magic! The Explosion magic that could not be used even after learning it due to vast mana exhaustion!? I heard it was a useless magic, but how is this useless!? This has completely changed the terrain!”

“Clearing so many squirrels in one attack... S-So powerful...!”

They sighed as I indulged in self-satisfaction.

Then Reinis said.

“Let’s move on to another location being attacked by squirrels. Also, can you use other magic besides Explosion? The bounty for squirrels is quite low. Selling squirrel meat is the main source of income.”

“That’s right. And even the chestnut trees were uprooted. I don’t know how much we will have to compensate for that... But if we can hunt 100 or so squirrels, it would be enough. By

the way..."

Reiner bended over next to me.

“—How long are you going to lie there? Are you hurt after being blown off by the shockwave?”

She asked worriedly.

“No. I merely cannot move due to exhausting my mana. So I cannot use any more magic today...”

Reinis said as he looked at Chomsuke, who moved its face to my nose and sniffed.

“Is it that exhausting? Then, starting from tomorrow, let's seal this magic. Use other magic tomorrow. Save Explosion magic for emergency situations.”

“That's right. Just use intermediate or advanced magic during normal times...”

I replied to both of them.

“Can't use.”

“...? Can't use what?”

“Ah. Can't use advanced magic right? It's fine if it's intermediate magic...”

“No. Can't use anything other than Explosion magic. I only learnt Explosion magic.”

“.....” X2

Both of them were silent for a while. Then Reinis said slowly.

“Then. That is the only magic?”

“Yes.”

“... In other words, you can use magic only once per day?”

“Yes.”

Both of them were speechless.

“.....We need to discuss this. Please wait.” X2

“Eh?”

They said and left me there on the ground.

As I lay there, I couldn’t hear what they were discussing.

After a while, they returned.

“Sorry for waiting... Ah. How should I say this? I feel that a rookie party like ours is unable to provide you with the opportunity for action.”

“Yes. With powerful magic like Explosion, it would be a waste for you to stay in our party.”

They said humbly.

“I don’t mind. As long as there’s growth...”

Compensating for each other’s weakness was the point of being in a party.

But Reinis shook his head hurriedly as he heard that.

“No, no, no. We are just a rookie duo. We were overconfident of ourselves in trying to recruit an arch wizard from Crimson Magic Clan!”

“Yes, yes! And, you see, neither of us have advanced jobs! So in terms of compatibility and balance—!”

Yes... If that was how it was, it couldn't be helped.

“This time, we would make a loss due to the chestnut trees being blown off, but we will pay for it!”

“That's right, so we will work hard to become stronger, until we are worthy of Megumin. At that time, we will reconsider, okay!?”

They spoke hurriedly as they carried me back to the guild.

PART 6

This was difficult.

I felt apologetic about letting someone I just met pay for the damaged trees caused by my explosion, so I paid the compensation myself...

“I ran out of money so quickly...”

I dragged my exhausted body and collapsed on the table as lonely Yunyun ate her meal distractedly.



Nobody came when I was away to do the quest?

When my magic power recovered slightly, I became curious and went to look for Yunyun's ad on the notice board...

"Recruiting party member. Must be gentle and willing to patiently listen to boring chatter. Must not mock people with weird names. Must be able to stay together even on days with no quests. Must be a frontline fighter. Preferably close to my age. I'm a 13-year-old arch wizard—"

Is this recruiting a friend, boyfriend, or what?

I felt that nobody would come if the recruitment was not done in a more relaxed manner...

There were many things to complain about, but it was taking all my effort just to settle my own affairs.

.....That's right. I didn't want to think of it, but could it be that I was being dropped from the party by those two people earlier?

They said their abilities were too low for me, but that could be a convenient excuse to kick me out...

—As I was about to ponder in silence.

"Hey, newbie! You don't even know what is a mackerel pike. How have you been living your life so far!?"

TL Note: Mackerel pike is also known as Pacific saury. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_saury

"No. I know what is a mackerel pike. It's a kind of fish, right? It is meant for the 'Roasted Salt Mackerel Pike Set' on the

menu, right?"

The tavern owner in the guild was arguing with a youth with brown hair.

It was the guy I saw through the carriage window when I first arrived in the city.

His clothes were strange, so I remembered him well.

I didn't see him this morning, so he must have just started work here.

"Right. It's that mackerel pike. A fish. The kind with scales and is very active. In this season, it fattens and is especially tasty."

"I know. I'm very clear about that. I'm sorry. Can you repeat your instructions?"

"Go to the field behind the guild and catch two mackerel pikes."

"Are you fooling with me?"

The youth threw his apron at the tavern owner angrily.

This was the archetypal, easily angered young master.

What was so revolting about a simple job like catching mackerel pikes in the field?

A blue-haired waitress walked by the brown-haired youth, who was arguing with the tavern owner. Somehow, she was carrying an impossibly large number of beer mugs with both hands.

I remembered that she was with the brown-haired youth.

She must be starting work here today, like that youth.

“Sorry for waiting!”

“Oh. I’m waiting for this... Ha! Wh-What? This is plain water! Hey, you think I’m stupid?!”

“Newbie! What is the meaning of this? You have been serving plain water to the customers since the beginning! Where did the wine go? Were you drinking it on the sly?”

The tavern owner turned from the youth to scold the waitress.

“N-No! I merely touched the wine with my finger...! Listen! This is the way my body is! Actually, I’m the goddess of water...!”

“Hey, uncle, listen to me! Don’t take me for a fool just because I’m new to this city! How can you do this to a NEET who is now seriously working? What is this? Workplace bullying? Did you give out nonsensical instructions to get satisfaction out of my confusion!?”

A girl who was complaining and a guy who was making false accusations.

Faced with these two, the tavern owner’s arteries were bursting.

“Damn! Both of you are the ones speaking nonsense! Both of you are fired! Fired!”

Hearing this, the guy finally grappled the tavern owner, while the girl cried out loud without regard for the public.

... Compared to them, I’m considered quite good.

Feeling a bit more confident, I decided to return to the hotel today.

—On the way back to the hotel with Yunyun.

“Megumin, how was it today? Did you find a good party?”

“No. We did a quest... but they say it would be a waste for me to be in their party.”

“Is that so? After all, Megumin’s magic is very powerful, but you must find a proper place to use it.”

Yunyun said and looked around, as if she was concerned about the situation in this new city.

“Yunyun, I saw your recruitment notice. Did anyone come?”

“Yes. Someone came... But it was an uncle about my father’s age, who said, ‘I heard you are 13? Uncle... No, I’m 13 too! You are looking for a frontline fighter, right? Leave it to me... I’m a high level crusader! I will protect you, little sister!’”

“You rejected, right? Of course you rejected, right!?”

“I-I rejected in the end... But that person chatted with me for a long time and treated me to lunch. I feel he’s a nice person. He said he will come and chat again tomorrow...”

“Ignore that person if he approaches you tomorrow! And rewrite your recruitment notice properly!”

“Ah!? I-I feel I didn’t write anything wrong...!”

PART 7

—The second day.

“Welcome. Ah, adventurers, right? There is some precautionary matters today. You can get the instructions from the receptionist.”

The elder sister waitress said to me as I arrived at the guild.

Precautionary matters?

I went to the reception area suspiciously. The receptionist was currently explaining to other adventurers.

“There is a report that demons have been sighted in the forest. According to the report, it probably isn’t low level demons like gremlins. Demons often have high intelligence and can use magic, so they are powerful enemies. It is currently under investigation. If you are not confident in your abilities, please do not take quests related to the forest.”

After this, adventurers everywhere sighed.

A lot of quests with good rewards were related to the forest.

Rookie adventurers began with hunting Giant Toads to increase their levels. Once their levels are high enough to handle the toads, they would usually enter the forest—

Hearing the notice, I walked towards the notice board for recruiting party members.

As a thank-you gift, the caravan leader prepared and paid for the two-weeks fee of our hotel rooms.

I hoped to find a party and secure my income before the hotel kicked me out in two weeks.

“I will find a party which is looking for members today.”

I mumbled softly as I examined the notices.

The first notice seemed like a new one written by Yunyun.

“Recruiting party member. Hopefully, someone who is fine when the conversation gets stalled. Someone who wouldn’t keep a distance even if I visit every day. Someone who won’t get angry even if our eyes do not meet. No restrictions on job and age.”

She compromised on the job and age requirements.

I felt that her compromise was somewhat strange...

I looked at Yunyun, who was once again sitting in a corner of the tavern and waiting for people to come.

Yunyun was playing a combat board game that she brought along for the trip.

Her sad demeanor made me uncomfortable and want to talk to her, but this was probably better for her to improve herself.

I continued to examine the recruitment notices on the notice board. On the board,

“Recruiting wizard and priest. The three current members are sword master, lancer, and thief. Our goal is to defeat the demon king. Rookies are welcomed, as long as you are enthusiastic. Why not come and save the world with me?”

From recruitment with such heroic mentality—

“Recruiting party members. The two current members are crusader and thief. Requires kinky trash, one frontline member and two rear support members. Must be intuitive and decent.”

—To recruitments with something blotted out. There were all sorts.

The former portion’s handwriting was different from that of the latter portion. What was originally written in the part that was blotted out?

After being puzzled for quite some time, I noticed a decent one.

“Recruiting party member. The current party has four members, two of which have frontline jobs. There are also an Eris Cult priest and an archer. Requires wizard job.”

Not a bad party.

I went for an interview with the party that posted the recruitment.

“—I see. Megumin, is it? That’s a Crimson Magic Clan’s name indeed. I’m the party leader, Ain. I have great expectations for you.”

He said. With a sword by his waist, the man looked like a warrior.

The others include a person with a lance, a priest wearing a pendant of Eris Cult, and a person with a long bow on his back.

They looked at me with critical eyes.

They were all males, average around Level 12.

That was almost the level to graduate from being a rookie adventurer.

“Pleased to meet you. Then, should we take on a quest to gauge each other’s abilities?”

“Yes... Let’s go into the forest. There is an eyewitness report of demons, but we shouldn’t have a problem with a Crimson Magic Clan wizard. Any problem with this?”

“No problem. No matter whether it is a demon or something else, I will kill it in one hit.”

Hearing my self-confident reply, the party members smiled.

PART 8

In the wide forest near the city, Ain roared loudly.

“Too few! Jack, Thomas, and Megumin, back off! Rhodes, come with me to crush them!”

The accepted quest was to kill the slimes which appeared in large numbers in the forest.

Slime monsters were not scary when they were small, but once they ate enough to grow large, they could become difficult monsters that even first-class adventurers could not defeat.

It was a creature with strong resistance against physical attacks and could continue moving as long as the core within its body wasn't destroyed.

“Ain, weapons are not very effective against them! Megumin, can you use magic to clear them off!?”

Rhodes shouted as he pierced a nearby slime with his lance.

“Sorry. In situation and position, everyone will be dragged into the magic effect. I can do something if we are in an open space...!”

“I-Is that so? It can't be helped then! Hey, Rhodes, let's go!”

“Bastard. We just have to do it!”

As rear support, we could do nothing except watch the frontline fighters drive off the slimes.

Finally, they returned, panting and covered with burn wounds.

The priest Thomas ran over to heal them.

“We were lucky the slimes were not big. Megumin, how was it? Are Rhodes and I of acceptable standards?”

“Of course. Both of you are cool. It’s up to me to show my skills next.”

Hearing this, Ain and Rhodes said shyly that they had great expectations and turned their backs to leave.

“—Why are there Blood Stink Flying Squirrels here!? Don’t they dwell in the deeper parts of the forest!?”

“We cannot reach them! Jack, Megumin! Use bow and magic to hit them down!”

We were ambushed by a large group of flying squirrels as we trekked deeper into the forest.

Both Ain and Rhodes used their weapons to intimidate the flying squirrels from getting too close.

“So-Sorry. If the flying squirrels congregate in low altitude, the magic will explode next to us!”

“You must be joking! Isn’t some smaller scale magic... Damn, Jack! Think of something!”

“Un-Understood. Leave it to me!”

Jack repeatedly shot down the flying squirrels which were circling around. To protect Chomsuke from getting hurt, I hugged it closely, making sure not to get in the way and lowering my head.

At this time, some sort of liquid dropped onto my hat.

What was that earlier?

There wasn't any dark clouds in the sky, so it couldn't be rain...

At this time, Ain raised his shield overhead and shouted.

“Blood Stink Flying Squirrels mark their targets with their pee! If you get drenched with it, the strong stink could not be removed for a week!”

I knew I couldn't do it, but I still attempted to hit the Blood Stink Flying Squirrels by swinging my staff in rage.

“Hey, Megumin, what are you doing!? Keep your head quietly!”

“Don't get in my way. I won't stop until these flying squirrels are exterminated!”

As Thomas grabbed both my arms, most of the Blood Stink Flying Squirrels were finally defeated. The surviving few realized their disadvantage and escaped.

“—My important hat is ruined... I just have to wash it and leave it in the hotel for the stink to dissipate...”

During the rest after defeating the flying squirrels, I stared hatefully at the stinking hat in my hands.

Rhodes came over to the tree stump on which I was sitting.

“Hey. I want to ask. Under what conditions are you able to use magic?”

“Yo-You are asking about conditions... I guess as long as the

enemies are far away in an open space that would not drag anyone else into its effect?"

Since I couldn't do anything in the previous two battles, Rhodes probably felt I was unreliable.

"I see. Then it's a mistake to enter the forest. Today, we will let you witness our abilities. Tomorrow, we will hunt on the plains instead."

Ain said as he listened on the side and stood up.

I felt apologetic and embarrassed.

At this moment.

The trees rustled as if something was coming our way.

"Slime? Is it attracted by the scent of blood of the flying squirrels? Good timing. Now we can complete our quest..."

What came forth was indeed a slime, but...!

"S-So huge!" X4

That slime was as large as a storehouse.

"Hey, this is bad! We can't handle one this size! Retreat!"

"Bu-But are we leaving it to grow further!? If we don't destroy it now, next time it would become unstoppable!? There are flying squirrel corpses everywhere, so there is no lack of food...!"

Ain and Rhodes panicked. Jack and Thomas stood in a daze.

I said to the four of them in a short and simple manner.

“Please keep your distance from the slime.”

Hearing me, all four of them turned around.

“Wh-What? You intend to use magic?”

“It’s better to run away now...”

The four of them said to me as they moved away from the giant slime.

The slime started to engulf and consume the flying squirrel corpses.

Perhaps because there were tasty food, the slime couldn’t be bothered with us.

The four people moved behind me as I started the incantation.

“I say, doesn’t slime have high resistance against magic? Small ones are manageable, but even a Crimson Magic Clansman could not handle a slime of that size, right?”

“Shh! Shut up. This is a good chance to witness the rookie’s ability. It’s fine even if she couldn’t defeat it. If she can damage a slime of that size, then she is definitely worthy of being in our party.”

Ain’s and Rhodes’ voices came from behind me.

“Let’s give up on the reward this time. Compared to this... The slime is too big. It’s fine if we just report it to the guild immediately.”

Jack said as he prepared to run away.

The priest Thomas was puzzled as he listened to my

incantation.

“What is it, Thomas? Is there a problem with the rookie’s magic?”

“Oh. There’s static electricity around Megumin. Ah. Is this lightning magic?”

Unlike Thomas, Ain and Rhodes became interested and said without panic.

As the only magic-user besides me, Thomas realized that the upcoming magic was of an abnormal scale.

The other three person saw Thomas’ face paled, and turned to look at me.

“Hey, Megumin. There’s no need to defeat the slime here. There is no adventurer in this city that can defeat a slime of that size. If we report it to the guild, they will summon more powerful adventurers from other cities.”

“I-I say, is there a problem? The atmosphere feels like it is quivering...”

Ain and Rhodes said uneasily.

As I continued the incantation, I pointed my staff at the slime which was still consuming the flying squirrel corpses.

“Wa-Wait! This feels really bad! Hey, back off further!”

“Eh? What are you saying, Thomas? We are already so far away. No matter what, this distance should be...”

As Rhodes said that, the incantation for Explosion magic was finished.

“Everyone, please lower your heads! A mere slime would be blasted into oblivion by my sure-kill magic!”

The four of them heard this and dropped down on the ground.

“Explosion—!!”

As a beam of light flashed from the staff tip and penetrated into the slime’s body, the huge body expanded.

Following a blinding flash, the explosive wind knocked down all the surrounding trees.

All the birds in the forest flew off because of the explosive noise, and the shockwave shook the entire forest.

As the smoke cleared, the huge slime was gone. Including me who was suffering from mana exhaustion, the other four people were prone on the ground.

... Next time, I should increase the distance a bit more.

PART 9

—In the tavern of the guild.

After exhausting my mana, I collapsed on the table. Ain and the rest started drinking beer in high spirits.

“Ah. You are truly a Crimson Magic Clansman. So admirable!”

“That scene was so awesome! I was trembling after seeing the ruin left in the wake of that magic!”

“Unbelievable. To think that magic resistant slime was defeated in one hit...”

The three of them praised me repeatedly.

At this time, Rhodes came over with a drink.

“Uh, how should I say this? Sorry. I thought you were a wizard who is all talk only. My apologies.”

I lifted and shook my head at Rhodes, who lowered his head and handed over some fruit juice.

“No. There is something I should say, so if you want to apologize, do it later.”

Hearing this, the four of them wore a puzzled expression.

“Actually, I can only use that Explosion magic earlier. In other words, I can only exert all my power to use that magic once per day. I’m confident that I can be a trump card against powerful enemies, but will this party be fighting such powerful enemies every day?”

Hearing this, Ain quietly swallowed his saliva.

“... You can’t use other magic? For example, intermediate magic.”

“Nope.”

“... It’s fine if you can’t use it now. We can help you to gain levels, then you can learn intermediate magic...”

“I don’t intend to learn any skill that does not boost Explosion magic.”

“.....” X4

Receiving my immediate response, the four of them finally became silent.

“Uh. Our party members feel that it is sufficient to earn some money by fighting weak monsters. As of now, we have no plans to challenge powerful monsters. I’m sorry. Can you find another party...?”

—After receiving today’s reward and saying goodbye to them, I dragged my tired body along and was troubled.

Could it be that I was not a genius after all?

Was I a kid whom nobody wanted?

... No. There’s no need for panic yet.

I was in the city for only three days.

—I drank the drink given by Rhodes and recovered my wits. I searched for Yunyun, who should be searching for party members like me. She was still in the same seat as this morning, playing a board game by herself.

I walked over to Yunyun and tapped her shoulder from behind.

“He-Hello!? Welcome. My name is Yunyun. My job is arch wizard, but I can use only intermediate magic...”

Yunyun said quickly as she turned around. Upon seeing my face, she looked disappointed.

“What is this attitude!? I came over because you were so pitiful while playing alone in the corner of the tavern!”

... I thought no adventurer would come over after seeing her notice.

I sat opposite Yunyun and rearranged the game pieces on the game board.

“Ah, wait. Really. I was playing half-way...”

Yunyun complained, but she smiled happily.

We played the board game as we chatted.

“Megumin, have you found some party members?”

“No. I went along with a party for quest today, but there wasn’t any party that could utilize me properly.”

“Is that so? As for me, there was only an uncle who drank beer early in the morning. He said, ‘I’m a non-combatant. If that’s okay, I will join.’ I considered it for a while, but I felt that it would be pointless if it wasn’t an adventurer’s party. So I declined... Checkmate.”

“No. Just reject it without considering! Why do you always attract such uncles? I’m really worried... Even if they try to pick you up, don’t follow them blindly. Teleport.”

“I won’t follow them. I’m not Megumin who would be hooked by a meal... Okay, your turn.”

“I won’t be hooked by a mere meal. You wait and see. A few days later, I will fight some fierce criminals...!”

In the corner of the noisy tavern, we grumbled to each other as we moved the game pieces about.

“Upon seeing our crimson eyes, adventurers should be rushing over to invite us to their parties. This is truly the City of Rookie Adventurers. Don’t they know anything about the Crimson Magic Clan?”

“Maybe existing parties do not lack wizards... But the school taught us that wizards and priests are fairly rare. Maybe we are being avoided because of our age... Checkmate.”

“Ugh. If I retreated here, that sword master would rush forward. This square is within the shooting range of that archer... So teleport there... There aren’t many wizards in the city, so there should be some demands.”

There were some people who avoided our gazes after seeing our crimson eyes.

But none of them came to talk.

Was it really as Yunyun said? Were we being avoided because we were too young?

“Although teleport is very annoying, this should be the end! You are careless just because adventurer is the weakest game piece. Level this adventurer piece to become sword master! Good, now the die is cast!”

“.....Explosion!”

“Ah!!”

I used the special skill of the arch wizard piece to flip the board over and sighed deeply.

Could I find companions tomorrow?

“Megumin, another game! Let’s play another game! The rules said Explosion can only be used once per day, so I will win in the next game! ...Hey, where are you going? Don’t run off after winning!”

PART 10

I thought about today's events as I was on my way back to the hotel.

Today, I experienced my second party.

Was a wizard who could only use Explosion magic really that undesirable?

No, no, no. A party that specialized in hunting weak monsters really would not require such a wizard, but if it was an elite adventurer, or...

Right. For a party that specialized in high reward quests and a party that fought in the frontline to defeat the demon king, I must be necessary.

There must be some in this city.

Adventurers who aimed to defeat the demon king.

As I thought about this and dragged my tired body along the street, I heard an imposing cry—

“Don't miss out on this! Welcome and take your pick of fresh bananas just caught from the river! Only 300 eris! Only 300 eris. Want some!?”

“Get some! ...Eh. Hey, what did you just say? Did you say bananas that were caught from the river?”

In front of the fruit store were a brown-haired guy and a blue-haired girl who was holding a fan.

It seemed I frequently encountered them.

“Come and see! Now only 300 eris! Two bunches for 600 eris! ...That’s what it should be, but listen! Two bunches should be 600 eris, but there is a special discount now! Only 500 eris! It’s a very good deal!”

“Ver-Very good deal! ...Hey, did you say earlier that the bananas were caught from the river...”

It seemed this duo that was fired from the tavern was starting a new job selling things.

As if excited by the gathering crowd, the blue-haired girl raised her voice and knocked the table with her fan.

“Good. Don’t miss out on this opportunity! Next, these bananas will vanish with a curse!”

“Hey, hey. Can you really do that!? There are so many people here. What are you going to do if you fail!?”

I was interested in the blue-haired girl’s words, so I stayed and watched.

“No secret device and no tricks! I will merely cover the banana with this cloth! Then chant ‘Vanish!’ Vanish, vanish... Okay, look!”

“Oh!?” X4

I cried out in surprise along with the watching crowd.

“Awesome!”

“What is with that girl! I have never seen such a good performer!”

“Hey, I will buy one! One bunch of banana!”

“Ah, I want to buy too!”

“Me too! I want two bunches!”

The audience changed into customers and rushed to the blue-haired girl.

“Thank you very much! Hey, if this carries on, it will be so easy! Okay, bring out the vanished banana! We will have a great sale!”

The brown-haired guy said happily, but the blue-haired girl showed a puzzled expression.

“What are you saying? The banana have vanished, so it isn’t here anymore. Okay, bring out some new bananas to sell!”

“Ah!? No, I don’t understand what you mean! What do you mean by ‘Vanish’? How can the banana just vanish!? Hey, where did you hide it? Stop joking and take it quickly!”

“I’m not joking. I said there is neither secret device nor tricks. Quickly bring out the bananas for sale and for the vanishing performance.”

“Stop fooling me. It’s afternoon already, so stop dreaming!”



Before the customers, both of them were tapped on the shoulders from behind.

The fruit store owner was standing there with a hard expression.

“Fired.”

“Why!”

“Hey, please wait. It has nothing to do with me!? She’s the one who made the bananas vanish!”

The blue-haired girl cried in grievance, while the brown-haired guy tried his best to explain.

After seeing their farce, I felt silly being troubled, so I turned my back on them and returned to the hotel.

INTERLUDE: SCENE 1

—A Lonely Girl Who Was Looking For Companions—

I sat in the corner of the Adventurer's Guild, and repeatedly looked at the party recruitment notice board with a sense of unease.

Megumin, my fri... rival who traveled with me so far, had found a party and left to do a quest.

On our first day as adventurers, our distance had widened.

Although Megumin was petty, bad tempered, and had a weird perception, she still had considerable social skills.

After living so long, the thing I talked most to was the marimo reared at home.

TL Note: Marimo is a kind of green algae ball found in lakes. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marimo>

It was too difficult to talk to strangers. I simply couldn't do it.

Therefore, I posted a notice at the party recruitment notice board...

“...! I see it! Someone just looked at my notice!!”

Looking in the direction of the notice board, I saw a small adventurer's party reading my notice.

Maybe these people would accept me as a companion. How should I greet them? I'm so stupid. I never thought of how to greet them until now. I should keep to the order of name, job,

and skill...!

As I was getting hot-blooded, those people pointed at the notice and nodded. They looked around happily, as if looking for someone...

Meeting my eyes, they trembled.

Finally, this small party shrank and left hurriedly.

It seemed they were not recruiting...

But no problem. The notice clearly stated the job of arch wizard...

If I waited, surely some adventurers...!

—Did not come at all.

Some other people read the notice later, but for some reasons, they left without saying anything after seeing me.

... At this time, an elder sister with spectacles came over to my table.

“Uh, uh... Excuse me.”

“Ah, yes! What is it!? My name is Yunyun. My job is arch wizard, but I can only use intermediate magic. Sorry, but no problem. I can learn advanced magic soon!”

“No, no. I’m a staff of the Adventurer’s Guild! Sorry, I didn’t come over because of the recruitment notice!”

She seemed to be a guild staff.

“Uh, did something happen? Was there a problem with my recruitment notice...?”

“No. Although I thought there’s a problem with the way it was written... A lot of people complained that whenever they read the notices, a girl will stare really hard at them. They felt it was very scary...”

It was a misunderstanding! It was because I was very concerned.

“I know that very few adventurers are considered worthy of a Crimson Magic Clansman, but please don’t glare with your crimson eyes at those that don’t meet your criteria. It’s somewhat scary...”

Wrong! A Crimson Magic Clansman’s eyes would glow crimson only when excited!

I was excited because there was someone coming.

“...So-Sorry. I will take note of it...”

Hearing my reply, the staff breathed a sigh of relief and left.

... People were afraid of me. I was kind of hurt.

As I laid my head on the table slightly dejectedly...

“I heard you are 13-year-old?”

I raised my head and looked.

“Uncle... Wrong, I’m 13-year-old too! You are looking for a frontline job? Leave it to unc—me... I’m a high level crusader! I will protect you, my little sister!”

No matter how I looked, he seemed to be over 40-year-old. The heavily armored uncle panted and said quickly...

.....

“...Uh, uh, let's chat.”

“Eh!?”

The uncle cried out in surprise, even though he was the one who initiated the conversation.



CHAPTER 2 - EXPLOSIVE WEIRDO AND THE FOREST DEMON

第二章

魔女と森の魔王

イレギュラー



PART 1

—In the endless plains outside the city.

It was said that there lived trash monsters like Giant Toads.

But they never came to the city, probably because of the heavily armed guards.

In front of the main gate of Axel City...

“Explosion—!”

“Hey—! Wait, what are you doing—!”

The guard uncle ran over to me as I unleashed Explosion magic.

“Hey, little girl, what are you... I wanted to ask, why did you suddenly use magic, but why did you collapse on the ground? What happened? Hang in there!”

The guard carried me after I collapsed due to mana exhaustion.

I raised my head.

“Pl-Pleased to meet you... I’m Megumin, a Crimson Magic Clansman who recently moved to this city. I think these explosions will happen frequently from now on... Please excuse me...”

“Spare me! At least use magic only when there are monsters! Don’t use magic for no reason!”

Hearing me, the guard cried out in despair.

—I dragged my tired body along and staggered into the city with Chomsuke.

After using Explosion magic to release my frustrations, I thought and mumbled to myself.

“There was no recruitment notice today either. What happened? Did the adventurers in the city no longer need wizards...?”

I had been in this city for over a week.

Recently, there was no recruitment notice for wizards on the notice board of the Adventurer’s Guild.

There was only Yunyun’s notice, which nobody knew whether she was recruiting friends or adventuring companions.

Wizards were usually rarer than other jobs.

I didn’t think there would be no demand so quickly...

—After gratifying myself with using Explosion magic, I returned to the Adventurer’s Guild.

Noon was the time adventurers usually work.

At such a time today, I laid my head on the table again in the Adventurer’s Guild.

“What should I do...”

I whispered and sighed deeply.

This week, I repeatedly asked to join other parties for quests, but...

No matter which party, they all expressed disinterest after

completing the quests. There was no intention to recruit me. It seemed they were not interested in a wizard who can use only Explosion magic.

I was being treated as an unwanted person.

Me.

The genius me...

“Ahh!”

“Hey! What’s wrong, Megumin? Don’t shout so suddenly! I have a challenging task right now!”

Yunyun, who was playing at the same desk, complained as I hugged my head and shouted.

She was in the same situation as me, since she had not found any party member.

With a serious look on her face, Yunyun carefully stacked poker cards on the table into a pyramid.

Recently, her ability to play by herself was improving.

Perhaps, because she was concentrating so hard on this, other people were having reservations about approaching us.

I picked up Chomsuke, who was by my feet, and put it on the table.

Then, it took an interest in the poker card that Yunyun was holding shakily between her fingers.

It walked over to the card pyramid.

“Meow~”

“Ahhh!”

The fierce black beast, with its unfettered appetite for destruction, easily destroyed Yunyun’s work.



It was done by the cat, so it couldn't be helped.

Chomsuke looked happy after the destruction of the card pyramid. I ruffled Chomsuke's head as a reward.

“What should I do now...”

“Forget that. Apologize to me first!”

I didn't know what to do, so I just ignored the grumbling Yunyun.

PART 2

“—By the way, Megumin. Have you heard? Someone offered a reward for defeating the demon in the forest.”

I was running out of money, so such news couldn't be ignored.

“...Oh. Tell me about it.”

“I heard that most of the monsters which used to inhabit the forest have been exterminated. Since then, monsters mostly dwell in the deeper parts of the forest and do not come near the city... But for some reasons, recently the monsters that live in the deep forest are appearing near the city... Therefore, the profitable monsters in the forest have attracted attention. There is a rumor that the demon is responsible for driving the other monsters close to the city.”

...The monsters from the deep forest were coming close to the city?

I remembered there was a similar incident in the Home of the Crimson Magic.

I thought of the demon Anis who drove monsters to attack the caravan during our trip.

Was it that female demon again?

I did not think Anis could survive my Explosion magic, but...

I thought this matter had nothing to do with me, but there was a bad feeling about this.

“Yunyun, that demon... What does it look like...”

I wanted to check its appearance.

At this moment.

“Oh, you even brought along two cute girls. You are just a rookie, so why are you starting a harem? I’m so envious. Give one to me!”

A crude, boorish noise resounded in the guild.

“Hey, what are you doing?!”

“Don’t pester me, you damn drunk!”

This was responded by some girls.

I looked at Yunyun as she sneakily glanced at the people who were arguing.

“No! Yunyun, don’t meet eyes with those kind of people, or we’ll get dragged into it.”

“Wa-Wait, Megumin. This isn’t right! Don’t you want to help them!?”

Yunyun complained to me, but this was the Adventurer’s Guild.

Most adventurers were barbaric, so this was normal behavior.

The ones who were being pestered were rookies. This was a form of baptism for adventurers.

Yet...

“Give it up... I’m not a rookie. Despite my looks, I’m a very

famous adventurer... I'm only here to recruit a priest. It doesn't look like there's any priest in the guild, so I guess I'll return to the hotel for today..."

A deep voice was heard saying.

"What? Famous adventurer? I don't recognize you. I'm a famous adventurer in this city!"

"You mean infamy? Let it go. He probably have the advanced job of sword master. And his sword might be magical. I can sense powerful magic at work."

The one who said this was probably his fellow crony.

The girl's advice reached our ears, but...

"So annoying. Shut up! I don't care about magic sword. I'm not afraid of such things! Come, humor me! You are a famous adventurer, right? Then practice swordplay with me!"

"...It can't be helped then. Let's go outside. Both of you go and rest."

"I understand. Then we'll be leaving. Finish that gangster off."

"He looks despicable. Don't be careless, okay?"

They seemed to be of one mind.



The people in the guild looked on as the source of the disturbance went outside.

Since it was an interesting development, I peeked in that direction too...

“Hey, Megumin. Didn’t you say that we shouldn’t meet eyes with those kind of people?”

Yunyun called out softly to interrupt with my peeking.

“Nobody would want to miss out on such interesting development. Let me look.”

“N-No way! In my eyes, the pesky one will lose. That gangster will get beaten instantly and return. If your eyes meet at that time...”

“—Bas-Bastard! What was that? That botter... Why is he both handsome and strong... Hey, what are you people looking at? Stop looking!”

He truly returned instantly.

It seemed he was defeated the moment he left the guild.

“That’s why I told you to stop. I know what your personality is like, so I won’t tell you not to bother people... but you should check your target out before picking on him.”

“I-I know. Next time, I will find someone weaker... Why can’t there be a weakling with a lot of pretty girls?”

I didn’t want to meet eyes with a gangster who spoke such boorish words.

To avoid getting involved, we left the Adventurer's Guild.

PART 3

—The second day.

“Explosion—!!”

“You again!”

The guard roared in a voice that matched the intensity of the noise generated by Explosion magic.

Following yesterday, I came to use Explosion magic again today, but...

“I told you yesterday not to use magic without reason! By the way, recently several huge craters appeared suddenly near the city! Those were made by you, right? It took a lot of manual labor to fill those holes!”

“Bu-But I did as you asked today. I used magic on a monster. I defeated a Giant Toad! ...So can you just let it slide?”

I collapsed on the floor and begged the guard who was running towards me.

The guard sighed and picked me up.

“I can easily defeat Giant Toads and similar monsters. I alone am sufficient to deal with the toads appearing near the gate. Little girl, can you use this magic to defeat stronger monsters further away from the city?”

“After using magic, I won’t be able to move due to mana exhaustion. If I become immobile away from the city, I will be eaten by other monsters that come later.”

“Little girl, you should find some companions.”

I wouldn't be in such difficulties if I could do that—

I said farewell to the guard uncle and dejectedly dragged my tired body back to the guild.

—I heard a familiar voice.

“Nooooo! I don't want! Why? Why must I move bricks!? Find me a more suitable job!”

“Even if you say that. This is the only simple job that gives daily wages. It can't be helped. Don't be willful.”

“Noooo! At least let me be a salesperson! Let me be a salesperson again! I have confidence that I can do it right this time!”

“Where does your confidence come from? Miss, I'm begging you. I don't want to do this either. I rather take on quests immediately, but we will die with our current equipment, okay? Don't be picky and work here. Recently, there's a shortage of manual laborers, since they are busy filling up holes in the plains near the city. Thanks to this, the wages are higher at this time. Don't worry, you can do this easily!”

It was the strange duo that I was fated to keep meeting.

They were arguing outside the office for construction works.

It seemed they were here because the wages were good due to labor shortage.

But the blue-haired girl wanted some other job, so she adamantly refused to enter.

Good. It seemed I wasn't the only one who couldn't adjust to

society and didn't know what to do.

"Don't say stupid things! Who do you think I am!? Dirty manual labor does not suit me! And shouldn't you be feeding me better food? It has been bread crumbs every day! Why must I eat those things every day!? A noble existence like mine must watch what I eat!"

"When we first met, you were eating snacks! Enough. How long are you going to keep being coy? Let's go! I want to prepare my equipment and start adventuring!"

"Noooo! I don't want to move bricks! Why is a NEET like you so enthusiastic!?"

They were doing their best to make a living.

I watched the girl being dragged away. I sought work and companions too, so I walked towards the Adventurer's Guild.

PART 4

Several adventurers suddenly stood up when they saw me entered the guild.

As if they were afraid of something.

Perhaps it was because I was a Crimson Magic Clansman.

Or did I already possess dignity of an adventurer?

As I smiled happily at the thought, the adventurers who stood up went over to the notice board and tore down a recruitment notice.

.....

“Excuse me.”

“Ah, yes!? Wh-What’s the matter!?”

I spoke to one of them who tore down the paper from the notice board. She was ridiculously afraid.

“... Elder sister, may I see the paper that you just tore down?”

“I refused.”

“Let me see.”

I forcefully snatched the paper from the elder sister who was unwillingly hiding it behind her back. Written on the paper was...

“Recruiting wizard. My party consists of four members. No

limit on magic type.”

“Oh! No limit on magic type! How convenient! Actually, I’m a wizard without a party!”

“So-So-Sorry. The spot has been taken, so the party is full now. That’s why I tore down the paper...!”

I seized the elder sister who was intending to flee after saying that.

“This excuse is too lame! What? Are you looking down on Explosion magic? Do all the adventurers in this guild intend to ignore me!?”

“N-No! I don’t look down on Explosion magic. Recently, there... Recently, there’s a rumor that a girl from the Crimson Magic Clan, who uses Explosion magic, is very... Whenever she sees monsters, she will use magic without regard for the surrounding. She is said to be sick in the head...”

“This is just picking a fight! Sick in the head! Let’s see if you all can still be so garrulous after witnessing my magic! ...Ah, what? Let me go!”

“We’ll be troubled if you use magic in the guild!”

As I chanted the incantation despite being out of magic power, the guild staff and other adventurers stopped and dragged me off further into the guild.

“—Miss Megumin. This is not acceptable. It is forbidden to use advanced magic or higher in the city. If you do this again, you will have to spend the night in the police station.”

If I ran out of money, it wouldn’t be bad to go to jail. At least, I wouldn’t have to worry about food and shelter. I was probably hopeless to think like this.

After being severely lectured by the staff, I walked over to Yunyun who was enthusiastically playing alone...

“—N-No way! Do you think I’m a cheap woman who would blindly follow anyone!?”

“I didn’t say that! I’m just begging you. Please. I’m not plotting anything! I just want to let my mother be at ease. Just pretend to be my lover for a while! My sick mother said she wanted to see her grandchild before she dies...! If not, at least daughter-in-law... I can only beg this from my only friend, Yunyun...!”

“On-Only friend... No, even so, pretending to be a lover is too —! I’m only 13-year-old. I’m not an adult yet!”

Seeing her troubled face, the man said.

“No problem. Just a simple greeting will do! I don’t intend to do anything, so there won’t be any issue! No problem!”

“Really!? Wa-Wait a moment. Why are you trying so hard!? I should refuse...”

“Please! I beg you, I beg you. Just one date. If convenient, one hour. No, 30 minutes would do!”

The man begged with a despairing voice. He was already on his knees to beg Yunyun.

“No, this violates the original intent...! Isn’t it pretending to be lovers before your sick mother!? Why is it a date now...”

“I beg you. I beg you. I beg you!”

The man finally kneeled down.

“Wait. Please wait. Wait a bit...”

“Please. Please. Please! I beg you. Just for a bit. I’m begging you!!”

Perhaps unable to turn him away, Yunyun looked afraid and troubled. She said to the kneeling man.

“Ugh... Th-Then, just for... a while...”

“Really!?”

“Really your head. What are you up to exploiting another person’s kindness!? Want me to call the police?”

“Wh-What are you saying!? Ah, oh. You are that sick-in-the-head wiz...! Wait, spare me. Not the police! I understand! I will leave obediently!”

Seeing my sudden intrusion, the man hurriedly escaped.

I chased him off and interrogated Yunyun.

“What are you doing? You are being too easy to lead by the nose! What are you going to do if you get kidnapped like this!?”

“Bu-But, but! He said his sick mother needs to see his lover...!”

“That was a definitely lie! Who else!? When I was absent, were you being asked to do strange things by other people!?”

“N-No strange requests! The uncle who frequently drink beer during the day requested, ‘From now on, don’t call me uncle. Call me daddy.’...”

“That is already very strange! You surely refused, right!? Or rather, don’t ever talk to him again! The chief, your father, will cry if he finds out that his daughter is calling a stranger

‘daddy’ in a faraway city!”

Seriously. Why was she so vulnerable?

She was only in this city for a week and already encountered such dangers.

Yunyun flashed a piece of paper before me. She stared and said.

“But it can’t be helped. After spending so many days in this tavern, the only person to talk to me was an Axis Cultist trying to convert believers...”

“Why are you handing out pamphlets for that person!? Throw it away!”

I crushed the Axis Cult Recruitment Form in Yunyun’s hands and threw it away.

This would not do.

If I left Yunyun alone to force her to overcome her communicative barrier, her social inadequacy would just worsen beyond the point of redemption.

But I was too busy trying to find adventuring companions...

—Right.

“Yunyun, how about it? While we are still looking for new party members, want to form a temporary party with me?”

“Eh—!?”

Hearing my invitation, Yunyun was shocked for some reasons.

What? Was the invitation that strange?

“Bu-But...! I made such a determined decision earlier...! After making such an announcement, it has been only a week... That...”

What was Yunyun talking about?

“What? I merely asked if you want to form a party. Why are you troubled over it?”

Hearing this, Yunyun’s face twitched.

“...I-I say, Megumin. Do you still remember what I said last time? You think, that... Once I learned advanced magic, we’ll have another match...”

“Oh. After defeating Anis, you were mumbling something in the carriage. What was it again?”

I urged her to continue, but her eyes were getting more teary.

“You are asking me ‘What?’... Wait a moment! How can you so easily forget such an important promise?! Megumin, you are always like this! What kind of Crimson Magic Clan’s top genius is this? You are just an idiot who can’t remember important things!”

“What did you say?!”

“It would be troublesome if both of you fight in the tavern!”

After receiving the second lecture of the day, Yunyun and I were driven out of the guild.

PART 5

“Seriously! Why is Megumin always like this? Don’t you have any memory? Did your memories get blown off by your own Explosion magic?”

“You are at it again! We are outside now, so nobody will stop me even if I make a scene!”

“Wh-What? Want a fight!? Your mana has been exhausted. You can’t even walk properly. Do you think you can win against me in your current state!?”

On the road back to the hotel.

We were still arguing.

“Seriously...! It was my once-in-a-lifetime declaration, and you completely forgot about it...! Unbelievable! Simply unbelievable!”

Yunyun covered her face with her hands, and shook her head angrily.

“I know, I know. It’s my fault for forgetting it. Then? What is that important promise? Please tell me again.”

“Eh—!?”

Yunyun blushed upon hearing my casual statement.

“What do you mean by ‘Eh’? What is that important promise? This time, I will listen carefully. Come, please say it out loud.”

I walked to the grass patch by the side of the road and sat up

straight, making a serious pose to listen to her.

Seeing my behavior, Yunyun panicked even more.

“N-No. No. Uh, I say... Forget it this time. Yes, forget it. It’s nothing! I will say it next time.”

“Hey. You just insulted me as an idiot, so what is this about? I don’t know why you are so embarrassed, but spit it out now. I will listen seriously this time.”

Looking at my serious pose, Yunyun was on the verge of tears.

But she still made her resolve and opened her mouth to speak...!

“Uh... When I learned advanced magic and won’t be a liability, I will—”

“Excuse me, both of you!! May I have a moment of your time?”

An old man wearing a tailcoat like a seneschal suddenly talked to us, interrupting Yunyun.

“No. We are talking about something important. Go away.”

“D-Don’t be like this! I’m actually looking for someone!”

Hearing the uncle, Yunyun and I shared a look.

“Actually, the lady of my household ran away from home because she didn’t want to be married... I’m sorry to bother you, but please help me find her...! In this country, having beautiful blonde hair and blue eyes are a sign of noble bloodline. My lady has long blonde hair set behind her head. If you see someone like this, please inform Dustiness family.”

We will reward you for the trouble...!"

The old man said and bowed.

Dustiness family belonged to the high nobility that even the ignorant us knew about.

The lady of that family running away from home was a major event.

That lady must be a cute and pure girl.

I imagined a dignified and delicate little girl. I wanted to see this noble lady and I was interested in the reward from a noble family.

"Leave it to me. If I find her, I will earnestly protect her."

"Thank you very much. I'll leave it to you!"

The old man said sharply and ran over to another passer-by.

"Yunyun, let's go! For us who lack money, protecting the lady is the best event!"

"Hey, hey! I'm not in need of money!"

I dragged Yunyun along and ran—!

"—So tired... In the end, we didn't find the lady..."

"Ugh...! I was hoping to make some money from Dustiness family. We searched the city thoroughly so many times! Where was the lady hiding..."

We searched everywhere in the city, but we didn't find any clue. We were very worried about the lady's circumstance after she ran away from home.

After all, she was a noble lady.

If she ran away from home, she might be scared and hiding somewhere, not knowing what to do.

I hoped she hadn't been kidnapped by some bad guys.

I thought blonde hair with blue eyes would be rare, so it would be easy to find her, but...

The only blonde person we met in the city was wearing heavy armor and saying dangerous things like "There seems to be a demon in the forest! Let's kill it in the name of Goddess Eris!" That elder sister rushed out of the city with a silver-haired thief.

In the end, after so much effort, we still couldn't find the cute noble lady.

"... It can't be helped. It seems we can't depend on luck! Tomorrow, let's take on a quest together!"

"In the end, we are still making a party!? I already said meaningfully, 'Before I learn advanced magic...'! it took a lot of courage for me to say all that! Can you really not remember!?"

PART 6

The second day morning.

We came to the Adventurer's Guild early. Taking advantage of the absence of other adventurers, we checked the various quests.

I left Chomsuke in the hotel because I thought Yunyun and I couldn't protect it when we encountered monsters.

"Hey, Megumin. Let's do an easy quest first, okay?"

Yunyun said and passed me the most basic request in this city— the quest to hunt Giant Toads.

I also knew that the Giant Toads, with its high reproductive rate, was one of the food sources that maintained the city.

We could keep that in reserve.

I roughly scanned the notice board...

"Clean the tomb of a mansion in the outskirts of the city", "Recruiting civil engineers to fill the craters in the plains", "Hunt the necromancer in the communal cemetery", "Finding the lady who ran away from home", "Investigate the water quality of the lake. Because of the increased work of civil engineers, sandy waste was reported to be flowing into the lake.", and so on...

Hm. Which one should we pick?

Our party consisted of two wizards.

Should we choose a hunt quest that could capitalize on our powerful offensive power?

“So let’s go to the forest, since recently rumors say it has been very profitable.”

“Eh? Wasn’t there a warning about a demon in the forest that warranted a bounty? We are just two persons after all. Let’s do something easy and go to the plains where there are a lot of weak monsters!”

What was she saying? I was aiming at the reward for defeating that demon.

But I was worried that cowardly Yunyun would end up playing alone in the guild again.

Oh well. Let’s kill some trash monsters in the plains today and let her gain some self-confidence—!

“—Oh. Little girl has brought along a companion today. Good. I’m relieved that you have a companion. As long as it is far away from the city, you can use magic as you please.”

When we reached the city gates, the guard uncle said to me.

It seemed he already remembered my face.

After leaving the city gate, Yunyun said with shiny eyes.

“Megumin. When were you so active that even the guards recognize you? I thought you were just strolling around randomly.”

“H-How rude! I don’t have the same social inaptitude as you do. While you were playing alone by yourself, I have become very famous in this city. Even in the Adventurer’s Guild, there are many who recognize me.”

“When did this happen!?”

I ignored Yunyun, who was surprised. I walked and searched for monsters on the plains.

... I probably did not lie at all.

“——Fire Ball!”

Yunyun’s magic killed the Giant Toads congregating on the plains.

It was nowhere near Explosion magic, but it still made a considerable explosive noise, charring the toads nearby.

I felt a bit hungry after smelling the fried toads.

“... Yunyun, did you bring some salt?”

“You want to eat now!? No. These toads are meant to be sold to the guild. After deducting the cost of transporting the toads, the net profit is 5,000 eris each. After killing five of them, there will be a quest completion reward, so this job is fairly profitable.”

Hearing Yunyun’s explanation, I looked at the charred toads.

There were three dead toads near us.

Selling them would get us 15,000 eris.

If we killed another two more, there would be an additional 100,000 eris.

I heard the guild staff mentioned this before. Hunting toads would make money quickly. This was indeed profitable.

It was very profitable, but...

“Okay. You should be confident now. Ask the guild to collect the dead toads. Let’s go to the forest.”

“It’s too early!? Let’s do another round!”

I admonished Yunyun, who was shocked.

“It’s noticeable after fighting a bit. Truly, the magic of Crimson Magic Clansmen like us is too powerful. Don’t waste time with the trash monsters here. Let’s find more powerful enemies. Besides, killing trash monsters isn’t good for gaining levels.”

“That’s true. But Megumin, you are not doing anything! Uh, I’m the only one who is fighting. I think in our current situation, we will surely encounter that demon if we enter the forest...”

“It’s even better if we encounter it. Think. I defeated Anis, okay? Despite how she looked, Anis was a greater demon. Compared to her, what is that wandering demon in the forest? Yunyun can take on the trash monsters. If that demon appears, I will take care of it. How is this?”

Hearing my self-confident words, Yunyun looked at me suspiciously.

“... Is it really okay? Whenever Megumin is so confident, she usually screws up...”

“H-How rude! Think about it. If we defeated that demon, we would be thanked by the other adventurers. Then, there would be plenty of parties inviting us to join them...”

“..... I’ll go.”

And so we decided to go.

PART 7

In the dense green forest, we penetrated deeper with Yunyun at the front.

We had not encounter any monster yet, so things were going smoothly.

When I came to the forest not long ago, we were attacked by slime and flying squirrels. Yet there is nothing today.”

“Flying squirrels? There are flying squirrels in this forest? Flying squirrels sound rather cute.”

Yunyun said calmly, being ignorant of how scary they were.

It seemed it would be good for her to be urinated upon once.

“Oh. Speak of the devil.”

There was some rustling in the aftergrowth. I raised a warning.

Yunyun became alert, having readied her staff and dagger.

What appeared before us was...!

“S-So cute...!!”

Yunyun muttered with shiny eyes.

The thing that appeared before us was about the size of a small dog. It was a rabbit with cute round eyes and fuzzy fur.

But there was a horn on its forehead.

But regardless of how cute it might be, a monster was still a monster.

TL Note: The horned rabbit is a monster in Arabic myths. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-mi'raj>

“Yunyun, this is the monster the guild staff warned me to be very careful about. It’s a One Hit Rabbit (aka Lovely Rabbit). Don’t be reckless just because it is cute. Kill it carefully.”

“Eh!? We are killing it!?”

Yunyun said on the verge of tears.

Even if you looked at me like that, it was still a monster.

Since we were adventurers...!

“Chu—...”

The rabbit cried out before us.

And tilted its head slightly.

E-Even if it was this cute, a monster was still a monster.

We must not be reckless...!

In a manner that was worrying, the One Hit Rabbit staggered shakily over to Yunyun’s feet.

“S-So cute...! What should we do, Megumin? So cute! It’s too cute! It must be a mistake to consider it a monster! After all, it’s so cute!”

“Wake up. This is the monster the guild staff warned us about. And I’m very concerned about such a dangerous name like ‘One Hit Rabbit’. Don’t be...”

As I spoke, the One Hit Rabbit stared at me with its wet red eyes.

“Chu—?”

It tilted its head as if saying, “Can’t you touch me?”.

... I wanted to touch it.

I wanted to hug it roughly and touch it!

“Come. I have some veggie sticks! Come and eat, eat~”

Yunyun had already fallen. She left some veggie sticks on the ground. Those were probably her afternoon snacks.

“So cunning. I also want to...”

Feed it— As I was about to say that.

The rabbit ignored the veggie stick and continued to stagger towards Yunyun.

There were rustling in the after-growth from which the rabbit appeared.

“.....?” X2

We shared a look and extended our heads over the after-growth for a look...

White rabbits were surrounding a huge thing.

What were the rabbits doing there?

... Upon a closer look, we realized what they were doing.

A huge gray wolf was lying there. It was dead with a huge hole in its body.

And the rabbits were surrounding it.

The hole was probably caused by the sharp horn.

In other words...

“Carnivores!?” X2

We cried out in shock. The rabbits turned towards us.

I took a glance at the rabbit that was still moving towards us step by step and got down into prone position.

In a moment, something white flashed pass above my head.

At the same time, I heard something struck the tree.

I looked back in trepidation and saw the rabbit struggling as its horn pierced my hat and the tree.

I ran over to the struggling rabbit, which was still stuck on the tree, and broke its neck.

I pulled the unmoving rabbit off the tree and recovered my hat.

“Yunyun, these monsters are just shameless! They will act cute and harmless, then suddenly ambush you!!”

“Such a cute thing. It even goes ‘Chu—’. What kind of vicious monsters are these!?”

The rabbits pounced towards us!

PART 8

We finally escaped the mob of rabbits and rested on a tree stump.

“Ugh, why is it like this? It made a hole in my hat... I’ll have to borrow thread and needle from someone when we get back to the hotel...”

I hugged my hat while on the verge of tears.

“(Puff)... (Puff)... S-So scary... When cute monsters attack in a mob, it got practically induce a heart attack...”

After using magic continuously, Yunyun was panting heavily as a lot of her magic power was consumed. Her face was pale as she said that.

They were indeed scary enemies.

The initial staggering walk was probably an act.

After that, while chasing us, their pacing was so fast...!

“We managed to escape because there were so many rabbits. But we couldn’t bring back the bodies of the rabbits we managed to kill, so we can’t get reward for rabbit meat.”

“That’s true, but Megumin, do you want to go back to where those killer rabbits are? I don’t. They looked so cute yet they were feasting on the wolf. Just watching that scene made me want to cry.”

I agreed.

I didn't want to go back either.

"Megumin, shall we go back today? I used a lot of magic in the earlier battle. At least, go back to hunt on the plains."

Hearing Yunyun's suggestion, I nodded unwillingly.

After resting a while, we took a detour to return to the city, avoiding the location where we met the rabbits.

"By the way, I gained a level from killing all those rabbits earlier. At this rate, it won't take too long for me to learn advanced magic."

Yunyun said happily.

"... From tomorrow on, let's stay in the plains to hunt weak monsters."

"W-Why? You just don't want me to catch up, right? Is it? Am I right?"

As Yunyun grabbed and shook my shoulders violently, I suddenly noticed it.

"...? Is something approaching? Do you hear it?"

That was a slight tremor on the ground.

"...? Yes. What is it? Monsters? Good timing. I can directly gain another level..."

Yunyun also noticed the sound from faraway.

"So cunning. My turn now. Yunyun, please standby."

"What are you saying? Megumin is the trump card against the demon, right? Even if you don't want me to surpass you..."

I say, is it a bit strange?"

Yunyun said uneasily.

It was indeed strange.

Or rather, the amount of cries...

"I have a bad feeling about this. Let's try to avoid this, okay?"

"F-Fine. I had enough today anyway. Let's go back and use the money from selling the toads for a meal."

As Yunyun said, the noises became even louder.

This was the sound of a mob of monsters closing in...!

"Quick, run, Yunyun! This is bad. It will be dangerous if we stay here."

"W-Wait for me, Megumin! Don't leave me behind... Ugh!"

The noises that was closing in ceased without us noticing.

The surroundings became silent, then a sound was heard from the undergrowth behind us.

What suddenly jumped out from there were...

The One Hit Rabbits that we fought previously.

Either they were chasing us or something was chasing them.

The rabbits before us did not look cute anymore.

"Chu—!" X5

The rabbits appeared behind in twos and threes, crying out together.

“Megumin, Megumin. There are too many! Lightning! W-What should we do!?”

“Y-You try to buy me some time. I will destroy them in one shot!”

I said to Yunyun, who used magic on the first wave of rabbits. I raised my staff and started my incantation.

“Using Explosion magic in the forest will provoke others, right!? I even avoided using Fire Ball so I won’t start a forest fire! Blade of Wind!”

A One Hit Rabbit pounced at Yunyun, who was retreating as she chant her incantation.

Yunyun drew her dagger immediately to strike the rabbit’s horn, creating some sparks.

“If it goes on, we will be eaten by rabbits! Destroying nature is nothing. If I fear such things, I won’t become an Explosion magician! Yunyun, get down!”

“Eh!? Wh...! Wait...!!”

“Explosion——!!”

I unleashed my magic at the rabbits as they closed in, knowing that I will be dragged into the explosion as well.

The tip of the staff glowed and the light shot into the mob of rabbits.

In an instance, the surrounding trees were blown away by the explosive flames.

Yunyun and I were helplessly blown off by the violent winds—

PART 9

“—Hey... Humans... Hey, humans. Still alive?”

I heard this seemingly faraway sound.

It seemed I lost consciousness for some time.

I was currently lying flat on the ground.

My cheeks felt painful due to tree branches or something, so I should still be in the forest.

I opened my eyes slightly and saw Yunyun’s sleeping face.

I distractedly slapped Yunyun’s cheeks.

Seeing Yunyun reacted to the pain, I breathed out in relief to know that she was fine.

How long was I unconscious?

I used Explosion magic earlier, yet enough of my magic power had recovered for me to move my body, so it must had been quite long.

“Are you awake? Those eyes... Are you a Crimson Magic Clansman?”

A voice came from above my head.

The speaker must had been protecting us while we were unconscious.

“... Ugh. So painful...? Where am I? Every part of my body hurts...”

Yunyun opened her eyes and propped herself up.

I also got up—

And looked at the person who spoke earlier.

“Yes. I’m a Crimson Magic Clansman by the name of Meg—“

I turned my head and froze.

Yunyun got up beside me and said casually.

“...? What is it, Megumin? You look strange... Wait. Ah! I remembered! I say, Megumin, what were you thinking when you used magic in such a close range... You. What is... it...?”

Yunyun wanted to lecture me, but when she saw me in a stunned state, she followed my gaze—

“Hello. May I have a moment? My name is Hoost... Actually, I’m looking for a huge black magical beast in this area... Wait. Eh? Hey, your face looks familiar. Or rather, you look like someone else...”

That was a demon.

It had pitch black skin with a metallic luster.

It also had huge bat-like wings.

It had a body capable of suppressing a giant as well as very noticeable horns and teeth.

A greater demon.

This type of demon should be in the deepest level of a dungeon. It was looking right at us.

“... My name is Hoost. I’m not a giant kobold, but a greater a demon. I’m ordained to be in service to a certain brat in future... How is my self-introduction? You are Crimson Magic Clansmen, right? This should be your custom for greetings, right?”

“Ahhhh!” X2

Looking at the demon who grinned with a mouthful of teeth, we cried out in anguish and ran away.



PART 10

How far did we run?

We left the forest without realizing it. After confirming that the demon was not chasing us, we collapsed on the ground.

Yunyun must be scared out of her wits as her eyes were swollen from crying.

“(Puff)... (Puff)...! W-W-... What is that!? Th-That demon was a preeminent greater demon! It looks really powerful and terrifying!”

“(Puff)... (Puff)... I really underestimated the demon in this place. I wasn’t expecting something this powerful...”

Honestly, if I encountered it alone, I would probably pee in fright.

Anis, who I fought previously, was also a greater demon, but this one was really too scary.

Yunyun calmed down slowly and said.

“Megumin. Did that demon say something strange? Something about Crimson Magic Clan and looking for a huge magical beast...”

“I don’t really remember, but it’s pointless anyway. I think he said I looked like someone... Never mind. Whatever. It’s lucky to survive after meeting something like that. I don’t want to enter the forest anymore for now.”

Yunyun's face was pale while she nodded at me. I sighed heavily.

"So tired... Hey, let's go back to rest, okay?"

"Let's do that... But before that, let's go to the guild for the payment of selling the toad meat. We can also make a report on that demon."

We rested in the border between the plains and the forest, then walked towards the city.

—We left very early in the morning to hunt in the plains and forest. Unknowingly, a considerable amount of time had passed.

In the glow of the sunset, we opened the door to the Adventurer's Guild.

"I'm serious! It stared at the abandoned castle on the hill near the city! It then got on the headless horse pulling the war chariot and went somewhere...!"

There were adventurers drinking and being noisy everywhere, probably because this was the busy time belt for the guild.

We went pass the noisy crowd and approached the reception area.

"Sorry for the trouble. We are here to collect the payment."

"Oh. It's Miss Megumin and Miss Yunyun. The toads have been collected. Three toads for a total of 15,000 eris. Please wait."

We said to the elder sister receptionist who was preparing our payment.

“Uh... May I ask if there is any request for One Hit Rabbits? We killed a lot in the forest.”

I presented my Adventurer’s Card, which recorded the kills.

“No. One Hit Rabbits are monsters in the deeper region of the forest. People won’t normally be attacked by them, so there is no hunt quest... But someone saw them near the city recently, so they may become a target for hunt quest.”

Oh. What a pity.

... Ah, and that too.

“Actually, we encountered the demon in the forest. It is a greater demon. It has the intelligence to introduce itself as a greater demon. Its huge body and pressurizing presence confirm that it is a powerful demon.”

Hearing this, the elder sister’s expression froze.

“And it said that it was looking for a huge black magical beast. It could communicate and didn’t suddenly attack us. Maybe it is a friendly demon...”

Yunyun said as the elder sister wondered.

“Huge black magical beast? ... I know something like that. The Rookie Killer is a dangerous monster with huge body and black fur. Why is it looking for such a thing though? As a pet...?”

The elder sister was troubled for a while.

“Oh. Thanks for your report... Greater demon and Rookie Killer, huh? This isn’t merely dangerous anymore. We may have to forbid entry into the forest before investigation is finished. Please do not enter the forest anymore.”

The elder sister said and handed over the payment for the toads.

PART 11

“I think this has become a major incident.”

We were on our way back to the hotel.

Yunyun muttered along the way.

“We encountered it at a very bad time. Right after we depleted our mana. Otherwise, upon meeting it, I could give it a...”

“Don’t mess about! We couldn’t win something like that! I feel that demon could even withstand Explosion magic!”

“... Oh. Is this a challenge? Very well. Let’s change our plans for tomorrow and go back to the forest...”

“No way! I definitely won’t enter the forest! You can go alone if you want!”

We bickered as we walked pass the office for construction works.

“Th-Thanks... Supervisor, you have been troubled...”

“Boss, you have been troubled~!”

The familiar and noticeable duo appeared before the office.

It seemed they just got off work.

The guy looked really tired. The girl, who hated manual labor so much yesterday, was smiling as if she spent a productive day.

The guy staggered along and said.

“Should we find a different job tomorrow...? As you said, we really cannot do this job.”

I looked at the guy who complained.

“What are you saying? Seriously, you are such a NEET... How can we change job suddenly after starting? Let’s go. Use the wages to have a good bath and meal! Work hard again tomorrow!”

The girl’s eyes brightened and she clenched her fist.

It seemed she discovered the joy of working.

“What are you standing there for? Megumin, do you know them?”

“... No. I don’t know them. It’s nothing. Let’s go.”

I urged Yunyun back to the hotel.

... That’s right. They were merely people I accidentally meet.

But, for some reasons, I felt good to see them.

I was somewhat concerned.

“I want to drink ice cold beer!”

“Hey, hey. That’s alcohol. Can we drink alcohol? What is the law in this country?”

“Seriously, why are you so timid? Then let’s make do with cold Neroid today.”

“Neroid? What is Neroid?”

That girl did not reply.

“I’m hungry. Let’s go! Do you know? The public bath houses open at this time. I can have a good bath at this time! I’ll go ahead first!”

She shouted and ran off.

“Ah! Hey. Wait. What the heck is Neroid!? By the way, if you run like that, you will fall...”

Before the guy finished saying, the girl fell down.

“... Megumin. Maybe it’s better if we don’t look...”

“T-True. Let’s go.”

I listened to the girl who was crying after she dropped her purse when she fell—

We returned to the hotel.

—A lot of things happened today.

I took a quest with Yunyun, then hunted toads and rabbits.

And encountered a greater demon.

... What exactly is that demon?

When it saw my face, it said I looked like someone...

I remembered that it was looking for a huge black magical beast.

Now I thought of it, perhaps it might have been better to listen to it further.

I opened the door to my room as I thought about this—

After walking in, I immediately rushed out and knocked on Yunyun's door.

“Yunyun, I’m sorry. Come quickly. After I returned to the room, our little black magical beast Chomsuke wasn’t moving!”

“What’s the food? You locked it in the room since this morning, right!? Didn’t you leave some water and food for it!?”

INTERLUDE: SCENE 2

—A Lonely Girl Who Was Troubled—

“Listen to me! If you are looking for a companion, I have a good recommendation! There is an excellent spearman by the name of Rein Chelka in this city! He should be the youngest Dragon Knight from the neighboring country. He’s very famous...”

“Don’t you find it suspicious? Anyway, if he is so famous, why is he adventuring in the Rookie City? By the way, do you know his appearance?”

“Hm... Uh... I don’t know his appearance, but I heard that he is of noble birth! Except for those who bought their status with money, nobles should have blond hair and blue eyes! That’s right. Just find a polite handsome guy with blond hair and blue eyes!”

The noisy conversation echoed in the Adventurer’s Guild.

Upon closer examination, a girl with a spear on her back was arguing with a girl who looked like a thief.

Both of them were about my age.

“Excellent spearman, huh? Blond hair is very conspicuous. Anyway, I want a wizard or priest. If you see someone like that, please persuade the person.”

A young man with a magic sword was talking cheerfully with them.

It seemed all three of them were in one party.

Anyway, that big brother said he was looking for a wizard or priest just now...

This was a chance.

If I continued to be so passive, the distance between me and Megumin would only widen.

I had given up on adventurers coming to talk to me. If I did not act now, I would regret later.

I could not accept being inferior to Megumin all the time!

I made my decision and stood up, walking over to the big brother with the magic sword...!

“Heh—!”

“Ha—!”

... After coming close to the big brother, I turned back as I was afraid of the threatening gestures of the other two persons.

—This wouldn't do.

I was a lonely coward, destined to be Number Two forever.

At this time.

“—Little girl, what is troubling you? Despite how I look, I'm still a priest. If you don't mind, I'll listen to your problems.”

As I sprawled on the table in despair over yet another failure to find companions, a beautiful elder sister came and talked to me.

That elder sister was wearing a blue priestly robe, so she was

probably an Axis Cultist.

On the way to this city, I was troubled by the Axis Cultists, so I didn't want to get involved with her, but...

“... After coming to this city, something that should have been easily resolved was unexpectedly difficult, so I was very troubled...”

Unwittingly, I confessed my problem to the elder sister.

Even though the other person belonged to the Axis Cult, feared by everyone for their unrestrained behaviors.

The elder sister quietly listened to my problem and then said.

“No problem. Lady Aqua will also help you.”

Hearing her kind words, I couldn't help but raise my head.

As I looked at her respectfully, she immediately took out a piece of paper.

She gently handed the paper to me. It was something I had seen before.

Axis Cult Recruitment Form.

“Come. If you join Axis Cult, you will definitely meet someone good...!”

The elder sister's attitude suddenly changed and forced me to receive the paper...!

“T-Too much... That's indeed the Axis Cult to take advantage of a kid's depression. Rescuing someone from the quicksand in order to kick the person off the cliff! Look at her happy expression!”

“Their doctrines teach them to do things that annoy others. Unbelievable... But that kid still won’t...”

The people in the distance said as they observed our situation.

I clutched the recruitment form tightly.

“I want to join the Axis Cult! In this way... In this way, I can make friends and find companions, right!?”

“Eh!” X3

Hearing my decision, even the big sister from the Axis Cult was surprised.

CHAPTER 3 - CRAZY PRIESTESS AND THE WATER GODDESS

第三章

聖女と水の女神
アコニツ・シズ 教徒



PART 1

The guild was noisier than usual this morning.

“The third party needs a priest! If any party has more than two priests, send one over!”

“Any wizard!? There are not enough magic potions here. We need a wizard that can create potions!”

It was a week after we reported the demon to the guild.

In order for the guild to investigate, the adventurers were banned from entering the forest, thereby losing a good place to make a living.

At first, everyone was hunting in the plains obediently.

But the hot-blooded adventurers wouldn't be so obedient forever.

The guild was continuously pestered with questions about the permit to enter the forest. Finally, the guild decided to take down the demon and recruited a hunting expedition.

The adventurers who were confident in their abilities came early to prepare for it as they were angry about losing the forest as a place for hunting.

I looked at the busy adventurers from the side.

“—We really caused a big disturbance.”

I whispered to Yunyun, who was nervously gripping her staff tightly.

“W-Why are you so calm!? Megumin, you saw that demon! Even in the monster-infested areas near the Home of the Crimson Magic, there isn’t any monster that fierce!”

Yunyun interrogated me while on the verge of tears.

“If you are so reluctant to go, you can stay behind. Since there are so many adventurers, we shouldn’t lose. Even if there isn’t 100 participants, there must be at least 20 or 30 of them. Anyone who joins the expedition will receive a reward. Even if you follow behind, you can get some money. It’s not a bad opportunity.”

“N-No way...! I-If Megumin is joining, I will be worried...”

“What did you say? You just said something, right? Come. Say it again loudly.”

“You heard that, right!? You wanted me to say it again because you heard it, right!?”

Yunyun blushed so hard that her ears were red. She sprawled face-down on the table. I laughed and shook her as I re-evaluated the situation in the guild.

According to Yunyun who came here very early in the morning, the beautiful but pale elder sister had been distributing potions and other items to the expedition members.

That elder sister was sadly whispering, “In this way, we’ll be reduced to eating bread crumbs and sugared water...”

With this many people and support, even a greater demon should be manageable.

“But my reason for joining the expedition isn’t merely for the reward. Think about it. If I can show off my skills during the

expedition, other parties would rush to invite me even if I don't ask for recruitment. Next, I must stir up a storm."

Hearing this, the dark clouds on Yunyun's face was swept away.

"Besides, there are two famous adventuring parties in this expedition. According to hearsay, one party has a handsome guy with a magic sword, while the other..."

At this moment.

"Hey, hey. Are you little girls joining too? Spare us. This is not a picnic!"

"W-Wait. Rex, look closely. They are Crimson Magic Clansmen. They might be more powerful than you."

Suddenly, a man and a woman standing at the sides were talking to us.

The man was tall and had a huge scar on his nose. The woman looked pretty, but her eyes were sharp and forceful.

If I remembered correctly, the party that they belonged to...

"Ha! More powerful than me? These two brats? Hey, stop joking. You say something too."

"No. It is as Sophie said. Haven't you heard of Crimson Magic Clan? I heard that they were all arch wizards and everyone could use advanced magic. They are the elites among wizards."

"No way, Terry!? Hey, both of you really can use advanced magic!?"

Yes. They were the other famous adventuring party.

“No. We can’t use advanced magic.”

Yunyun nodded to agree with my reply.

Hearing my answer, Rex gave Terry a look as if saying “You see?”. He laughed.

“Eh!? No. This is really strange. I heard Crimson Magic Clan should be like that...”

“Well, rumors tend to be exaggerated. Like that magic sword user who is supposed to be better than me. What’s his name again? ... And that crazy wizard that a person must definitely not get involved with. Those are all exaggerations... Forget it. If you want to earn a bit of money, it’s fine. Just make sure you little girls put in effort and don’t become our liability, okay?”

Rex said and laughed out loud like a child, then led his party away.

Was this the baptismal rite for rookie adventurers?

If it was the previous me, I would have started incantation immediately to scare him off, but since he was a member of the expedition, it would be better not to make a scene...

“Megumin, no. Calm down!”

“Eh!? W-What are you doing!? S-Stop it!”

As I was watching Rex leave, Yunyun hugged me from behind.

She must have thought that I would do something to Rex.

“I won’t do anything. Let me go! Even I have grown enough to not be provoked by this. Or rather, do you think that I’m an unreasonable person!? And don’t press your boobs on my

back. It's so uncomfortable! If you don't let go, I'm going to grab those boobs that you are so proud of until I leave a mark and make them shrink!"



PART 2

In the melancholic dense forest.

Yunyun and I were in the group at the rear of the expedition.

“(Sob)... (Sob)...”

Yunyun was crying next to me as she pressed on her chest.

“Stop crying already. Be quiet now. We still have to guard the rear.”

“W-Whose fault do you think it is...!? Ugh. I thought they would be torn off...”

There were 10 teams joining this expedition.

Each team consisted of six to ten members.

I heard that the vanguard opening the way was led by the party with the handsome guy using a magic sword.

As for the rearguard...

“Hey. We meet again! If monsters appear, both of you can just hide. At least be quiet for now.”

Rex mocked us as his party vigilantly advanced.

“Ah! S-Sorry...”

Yunyun made herself smaller as she was reminded of her position.

Although Rex’s party was famous, all the members had

frontline jobs.

Led by Rex with his great sword, the others had spear, axe, or similar weapons.

“Speak for yourself. You don’t look like a wizard. Do you know that there are slimes in this forest? When slimes that are immune to physical attacks appear, you should hide and let our Yunyun take care of them.”

“Me-Megumin!”

Yunyun softly admonished me. Hearing my words, Rex grinned.

“Oh. You dare to say something like that. Let’s watch your performance then. It’s true slimes are troublesome, so if they appear...”

Before Rex finished saying, as if it was happening on cue, the advance party of the expedition sounded an alarm.

“Monsters are appearing!”

Hearing the cries of the advance party, Rex and the others watched the surroundings cautiously.

If the target demon appeared, they would scatter to surround the enemy and let the priests and wizards in various teams initiate attacks.

If the vanguard encountered the demon first, they would rush over immediately...! But—

“Damn. Why are there so many trash monsters!? Hey, finish them off quickly! If the vanguard encounters the demon, we must support them as soon as possible...”

Faced with a sudden mob of monsters, Rex and the other adventurers were anxious.

This was that kind of phenomenon.

When a powerful monster appeared, trash monsters would scatter and flee. When we fought Anis, we saw the same phenomenon.

In other words, that demon must be nearby.

Something aimed at Sophie's head and dropped from the tree.

“Lightning!”

Yunyun's magic hit the slime which was making a sneak attack at Sophie. It shivered a bit and dissolved.

Everyone looked up at the tree-top from which the slime dropped...!

“Eh!?” X2

We saw a large group of green slime packed densely overhead as if they grew from the trees themselves.

“No! I can't stand it! I want to go back to the Home of the Crimson Magic!”

“Yunyun, stop crying. Think of a way to get rid of them! I know it's very disgusting, but if I blast so many slimes away, the surviving slime would be blown away in all directions! Use magic to burn them up here!”

I urged the crying Yunyun and pushed her from behind.

“Stop it! I understand! I will get rid of them. Stop pushing

me!"

"Hey, you are a Crimson Magic Clansman too, right!? Can't you use magic!? If she is so unwilling, then don't force her...!"

At the moment when Rex was blaming me.

"Fire Ball!!"

Even though she was afraid of the densely packed slimes, Yunyun used her magic at full power.

Accompanied by an explosive noise, the full-powered fire ball struck at trees, engulfing all the slimes in flames.

"Th-This is so amazing...!"

"That's what I said! They are the elites among wizards!"

"S-So competent...!"

"She is that girl, right? The one who is always playing poker cards in a corner of the guild..."

Both Rex and Terry, as well as the other adventurers nearby, exclaimed as they looked up at the burning trees.

"Well... Not bad, Yunyun. You're truly a Crimson Magic Clansman... Wh-What are you doing!?"

"You...!"

After burning up the slimes, Yunyun was on the verge of tears as she pounced at me. Meanwhile, Rex and the others doused the flames on the trees.

"Ah, so sorry. I apologize for looking down on you. Can that

shortie over there do the same thing?"

"No. My magic is more unique... Uh. It's a trump card against powerful enemy. Using it here would be a waste..."

I stuttered an excuse. Rex listened and raised his eyebrow.

"... What? A wizard who is all talk and no action."

"What did you say!?"

"Wait, Megumin. Calm down! Didn't you say in the guild that you have grown beyond such provocations!?"

As we argued, a noise echoed from the vanguard.

If I remembered correctly, the handsome guy with the magic sword was in the frontline.

They should be able to exterminate the monsters, right?

... As I thought about this, one of the frontline adventurers ran over.

"Hey, this is bad! We can't win that thing! The demon suddenly appeared and the hero with the magic sword was wounded by its sneak attack! That demon could even use advanced magic! That was the level of a leader of the demon king's army! Retreat!!"

—Hearing that adventurer's warning, we and the rest of the rearguard acted like bees after the beehive was attacked.

PART 3

In the twilight, the entire expedition walked lifelessly as if we were all undead.

“Tsk... What kind of hero with the magic sword is that? He was defeated so quickly. If we were in the vanguard, we won't be so embarrassingly counter-attacked, right?”

We were on our way back to Axel.

In the weary expedition, Rex clicked his tongue and complained.

It seemed the hero with the magic sword was rather famous.

According to hearsay, when the demon appeared, it suddenly attacked the magic sword user.

The hero with the magic sword was famous even within the demon king's army.

... Hero with the magic sword.

Hero with the magic sword?

I seemed to recall hearing something like this before.

A hero candidate who owned a powerful magic sword...

Right. If I remembered correctly, it was when I was still a student in school...

“Even if you say that, he used his sword to attack the demon after being wounded. It seemed he sliced off a wing. We could escape easily because of him. After all, the enemy was

at the level of a leader of the demon king's army. We'll have to wait for the guild to summon higher level adventurers from other cities."

Sophie explained to Rex.

Only Rex was dissatisfied as he spat on the ground.

“—Adventurers, welcome back! We received the report. It seems the enemy is rather difficult to deal with...!”

The elder sister receptionist welcomed us back in the guild.

During this expedition, the magic sword user was badly injured.

In addition, more than 10 people were lightly wounded.

Priests used healing magic and potions, but the teams couldn't fight any further for now.

After all, the main fighting force was absent due to the severe injuries.

One of the adventurers shrugged.

“This can't be helped. The enemy is a greater demon. It is too difficult for us rookies. Let's wait for support by the high level adventurers from other cities. The support request has been sent, right?”

His casual statement brought a troubled expression to the elder sister.

... What was going on? I had a bad premonition.

“Uh. Everyone, please calm down and listen. According to our recent reports, a leader of the demon king's army, Beldia the

Dullahan, left the demon king's castle with a lot of undead."

There was a disturbance in the guild after hearing about the leader of the demon king's army.

"Currently, Beldia's goals and destination are unknown... But this city has only rookie adventurers and is strategically unimportant, so this is the only place that won't become his target. Therefore..."

The elder sister looked apologetic.

"Until the matter with the leader of the demon king's army is resolved, the other cities could not afford to send anyone to support us. In other words... We could only rely on everyone in this city to deal with that demon..."

The mood in the guild was already weary. Now it was like a stagnant pool of water.

Sensing the mood, the elder sister added hurriedly.

"Wait. It isn't just bad news! Although she's an adventurer who registered only recently... There is an elite in this city who can banish demons, someone who has the rare job of arch priest!"

Arch priest.

Even among the advanced jobs, very few people took on this job.

As the natural enemy of demons and undead, it was truly the most suitable job for this expedition.

But...

"Hey, wait. You said she is 'an adventurer who registered only

recently'... Isn't that a Level 1 arch priest?"

Right. Just she just registered, her level must be low. Naturally, she couldn't learn any reliable skills.

Her statistics should also be...

"Listen to me! Most of that arch priest's statistics are very high. And she is an excellent arch priest who has learned all the skills!"

Her words shocked the adventurers in the guild.

And then...

"What kind of priest is she!?"

"Hey, is it true!? If that arch priest is really so good, maybe she can deal with that demon...!"

"Her traits! Tell me the traits of that arch priest!"

Among the excited adventurers, a bored man who was drinking beer stood up.

"... If that arch priest is here, she can easily heal the hero with the magic sword, right? In this way, in addition to the arch priest, even the magic sword user can become part of the fighting force again. That would definitely...!"

This speech caused the adventurers to look at each other.

"The traits of that arch priest are watery blue hair and a goddess-like beauty...!"

"Ooooh!" X3

The elder sister hadn't finish her sentence as the adventurers

rushed out of the guild.

... Just the male adventurers at least.

“... Everyone has left. Should we go and search too?”

“... They are so enthusiastic. They should find her quickly. I feel really tired...”

“Is it? I intend to stay in the guild for a while. Look, uh... My magic was somewhat useful earlier, right? So, uh...”

She was probably referring to the scene where she defeated the slimes.

... I see. She wanted to wait and see if the other parties might be impressed by her performance and invite her to join.

But how should I say this...?

I looked around at the empty guild.

“Uh, then, don’t come back too late, okay?”

“I know! No problem. I will be back in the morning!”

“Co-Come back a bit earlier!”

PART 4

The adventurers were running all over the city.

It was evening time.

The workers had finished their jobs and were returning home.

In this crowd, the well-built adventurers were pushing their ways through, hindering the traffic.

“Watery blue haired goddess! Find that watery blue haired goddess!”

There were shouts like that everywhere. Not long after, there was a girl’s cry of anguish, accompanied by a crashing noise.

It seemed one of the adventurers dashing about had ran over a pedestrian.

“Hey, watch where you are going! Because you ran me over, my wages are all scattered on the floor! Pick them up quickly! My wages amount to 10,000 eris. If they don’t add up, you can compensate using your own money!”

“Yo-You...! Is this really okay!? After all, you are a... Ugh!?”

Hearing the two familiar voices, I turned to look and it was indeed them.

The girl with watery blue hair covered the mouth of her male companion with her hands.

“S-Sorry. I will pick them up now... But the money on the floor couldn’t possibly amount to 10,000 eris... Eh, you have blue

hair!?”

“? What? I have watery blue hair. Do you have a problem with that? Whatever. Just pick up my money! If you are too slow, I won’t make it in time for the first batch at the bathhouse. I did a lot of work today, so I want to bathe quickly!”

“Ah. S-Sorry! … Although her hair is watery blue… Is this really an super-excellent arch priest…? As beautiful as a goddess… This must be a mistake. Her face is full of mud and dirt. A high class sacred job holder won’t resort to racketeering…”

“…? What? What did you say?”

“No. Nothing. I didn’t say anything. We are very busy now, so I will give you these. Please let me go. Goodbye!”

The adventurer handed over 10,000 eris to the girl as compensation and ran off.

“Fantastic! Look, this is the way to do things! Quickly pick up the money on the floor! …? Hey, why are you crying?”

“… You. Is this supposed to be the object of worship and reverence…?”

“What are you saying at this point in time? Isn’t it obvious?”

“Not obvious at all.”

The girl held her money tightly and started to argue with the guy.

—An arch priest with watery blue hair and a goddess-like beauty.

… At least I knew that blue-haired girl was not the one we

were looking for.

—I dragged my tired body back to my room.

Right. I had not done my daily use of Explosion magic today.

I would ask Yunyun to accompany me when she returned.

I thought about this as I reached for the door...

“Welcome back, Miss Megumin. Do you want a bath? Or want to eat me? Or do you want to join the Axis Cult?”

I listened and then lightly closed the door.

Then, the closed door suddenly opened violently.

“Miss Megumin is so shy! You are so irresistibly cute! You are still as much of a Lolita as before!”

The priest I met previously in Alcanretia was before me.

It was the Axis Cult elder sister who dragged me into various affairs in that city.

PART 5

“—Elder sister.”

“You can call me ‘Big Sis ♥’ too.”

I lay on the bed in the room and pressed on my head as if I was having a headache. I looked at the elder sister who was sitting on the chair, smiling, and hugging Chomsuke. I spoke again.

“I have a lot of things to do, elder sister.”

“My name is Cecily. You can call me ‘big sis’ or ‘elder sister’, but our relationship should be close enough for us to address each other’s names directly.”

“Elder sister, why are you here?”

I should have locked the door when I left this morning.

But I didn’t expect this person to enter my room.

Or rather, this person should be in Alcanretia, performing terrorist activities that they called proselytizing.

“It’s Cecily. Well... It’s a long story...”

Cecily looked troubled as she put her finger to her lips.

“It’s very troublesome to explain, so it’s fine to just consider it as a guidance of Lady Aqua.”

“It’s not fine at all! Anyway, the door was locked. How did you even get inside!?”

Faced with my forceful retort, Cecily suddenly looked serious.

“Actually... I have a request for you, Miss Megumin. That’s why I’m here.”

“Even if you look serious, you still can’t fudge this.”

To summarize Cecily’s explanation—

As the highest ranking official of the Axis Cult, Zesta apparently heard the voice of the goddess Aqua.

According to Cecily, Zesta was one of the top arch priests in the Axis Cult.

Apparently, he could even receive oracles from his goddess.

“I see. Although I think he is purely just a sex pervert, he still has the ability to drive off a greater demon like Anis. Receiving an oracle is still possible...”

I readjusted my impression of him, feeling that he at least seemed slightly like someone with a sacred job.

“Then, what exactly was the oracle about? Would there be a disaster in Axel? Or has the hero who would defeat the demon king been born!?”

“Lord Zesta said that he received a divine telepathic message from Lady Aqua in the direction of Axel. A few days ago, he heard a voice saying, ‘I’m Aqua. That’s right. I’m the object of worship for the Axis Cult, the goddess Aqua! If thou art my worshipper...! ...It would be a big help if you can lend me some money.’”

TL Note: See Explosion Volume 2 Chapter 5 for the entire scene.

“This is way too suspicious.”

An oracle itself was a difficult thing to believe. It was even more so when the contents involved asking for money.

“We don’t really understand the meaning of the oracle, but Lady Aqua must have encountered some major problems. Even Lord Zesta would not take Lady Aqua’s name in vain to benefit himself... We don’t know why Lady Aqua wants money, so as the beautiful priestess of the Axis Cult, I was sent here to investigate further.”

“Axis Cult really has nothing better to do.”

Complaining about “beautiful priestess” was too troublesome, I ignored it.

And which part of that mysterious oracle actually involved me?

“After coming to this city, I understood the meaning of Lady Aqua’s oracle. This city is currently under the threat of a certain demon, whose kind is the true enemy of Axis Cult.”

Cecily continued to hug Chomsuke with a serious expression. She came closer to me as I sat on the bed.

“Yes. A demon appeared in the forest near the city, causing some problems for adventurers... Are you saying that the oracle is referring to this incident?”

Cecily maintained her serious look as she snuck into my bed.

... What was she doing with this serious expression?

“Yes. Axis Cult doctrines include an ironclad rule that ‘demons must be killed’. Lady Aqua wanted money in this city. Plus, Lord Zesta said that something was happening in this city... Yes!”

Cecily snuck beneath my blanket on her own and exposed her face to continue saying.

“The contents of the oracle is to use the money given to me by the cult to employ mercenaries to kill the demon that appeared near this city!”

“I-Is that so...? By the way, can you come out from there? This is my room. My bed is used for sleeping...”

Cecily ignored me and happily buried her nose into the bed sheet and sniffed heavily.

... Hey.

“When I arrived in this city, I thought of Miss Megumin who was previously taken care of by me...”

“Hey. Whatever it is. Get off my bed first.”

When I tried to remove the blanket, I was surprised by Cecily's strong resistance.

She would be quite pretty if she shut her mouth. Why did Axis Cultists always make people feel regretful!?

“There are very few Axis Cultists in this city. They couldn't even sustain the normal operations of a church, so it is impossible to find enough people! Thus, I have a request for Miss Megumin!”

“I don't care. I don't care what you say! I don't want to get involved with you anymore! And stop sniffing at my pillow!”

After I removed the blanket, Cecily maintained her lying position on my bed. She retrieved a heavy sack from her pocket.

“If you find the legendary arch priest in this city, you get 5,000,000. If you defeat the demon, it will be 10,000,000.”

“I’ll do it.”

And so, I went to help out with Axis Cult again.

PART 6

Cecily and I were walking along the street.

“Hey, how is it? Did you find her?”

“Nope. There isn’t any skillful and beautiful arch priest with watery blue hair! There is only a drunk performer with watery blue hair! Damn. Beautiful Arch Priest Lady, where are you...!?”

The adventurers were still running around and searching for that arch priest.

“They were searching for so long with no result. Can we really find her?”

Cecily listened to my question.

“Where exactly are they looking for her? It may be better to search in a different location. According to Miss Megumin, what are the places that an arch priest would likely appear?”

“Places that an arch priest would likely appear... Probably praying in a church or pacifying lost souls in the communal cemetery...?”

The person was supposed to be a skillful arch priest.

She must have a strong faith and a noble personality...

“As a priestess of the Axis Cult, the things that I would do at this time... Firstly, assault the public bathhouse to be the first to take a bath. Then, have a feast of toad meat and ice cold

beer. After that, I would scold the drunk man who would be staring lustily at my voluptuous figure. Finally, I would go home in satisfaction after throwing rocks at Eris Church.”

“What kind of holy person is that?”

Was that arch priest also an Axis Cultist like her?

No way. According to the elder sister receptionist, she should be a goddess-like beauty with high statistics and great skills.

Then, the chances of her being an Axis Cultist should be astronomical.

... Probably.

“Yes—... My intuition is very accurate. If we look in the places I mentioned, we can probably find that arch priest. So how about it? If we go now, the bathhouse should be quite empty.”

“It’s just your personal desire, right? Let’s try the church first.”

“Ahahah... Miss Megumin. We can search tomorrow. Let’s go and take a bath together now!? We can wash each other’s backs!”

“If you don’t want to search, I will go back now!”

—We went to the Eris Church first.

That was what I intended...

But I regretted bringing Cecily along immediately.

“Hey, open up! I know you are hiding the arch priest who could defeat the demon here! Open up if you value your

door!!”

Cecily was pounding and kicking at the main door of the Eris Church.

“There’s no such person here! It is forbidden for anyone associated with the Axis Cult to enter this church? Please leave! Please leave!”

An agonizing shout by an Eris Cultist was heard from within the church.

Cecily clicked her tongue when she saw that the cultists have no intention of opening the door.

“It’s your turn, Miss Megumin. Please use magic to blow this church away on my behalf.”

“How could I possibly do that!? ... It would be fine if you communicated normally at the start. Why are you doing this? So troublesome. Please don’t complicate matters.”

I sighed and walked over to the closed door.

“Uh. I’m an adventurer. Can we talk?”

“Are you looking for the arch priest? Please leave. There is no beautiful arch priest here! What is happening lately? Quite a few adventurers came over in town...!”

... Everyone was thinking the same thing.

“Sorry to bother you. Actually, there is a powerful demon near the city recently. Can you let that arch priest help to drive away the demon...”

There was silence on the other side of the door, as if someone was listening to me.

“The reliable and skillful adventurer was injured. We hope to find that arch priest to help with healing that adventurer and opposing the demon...”

At the moment when I said this.

The church door opened.

“... There is no such arch priest in this church.”

A tired-looking woman in priestly robes said to me through the slightly opened door.

I listened and gave a bow, intending to leave.

“Although she is not in this church... The nearby orphanage frequently organizes events to give away food. I don’t know if she is there or not, but itinerant priests tend to participate in such events.”

The woman said and smiled at me.

“...! Thank you very much for your...”

As I was thanking her, there was a sound of something breaking in the church, followed by an anguished cry.

I turned to see what was happening...

“Good ball!”

There was a pile of rocks at Cecily’s feet. Facing the broken window, she made a victory pose as if she had accomplished her goal.

—On the way to the orphanage.

“Are you stupid!? Why are all the Axis Cultists so stupid!?

What is that ‘Good Ball’? I know your relationship with Eris Cultists is not good, but what caused you to do something like that!?”

“Actually, it is a bit strange. Since coming to this city, my mood is unusually high. Like this, my form is better than usual. It’s probably a blessing from our great Lady Aqua?”

“If your excited mood is really a kind of blessing, I would pounce to fight the goddess Aqua when I meet her after I died.”

“Phew... But it was so dangerous. I didn’t expect that demure priestess to freak out and pounce over...”

“Exactly! Even such an amiable person became so angry. What exactly were you trying to do!? When that gentle priestess suddenly changed her mood, I was really shocked!”

It was evening now, so dusk was setting into the surrounding.

As dinner time approached, the taverns and food stores along the road became crowded.

As we passed by a certain tavern, there was an exceptionally loud cheer from within.

Hearing the cheer, Cecily staggered over as if she was a moth attracted by the flame...

“Hey, where are you going!? We have no time to play. If we don’t hurry to the orphanage, the charity event at night would be over!”

“Even if you say that— That tavern is full of happy cheers...! As an Axis Cultist, my intuition tells me that the arch priest is inside that tavern...!”

“What would that arch priest be doing in that place!? That tavern is where performers congregate. Why would a powerful and noble holy person be in that place!?”

“But Lord Zesta, the top holy man in our cult, would go to even more disreputable taverns every three days...”

“Please don’t treat that old man as a holy man. It will provoke other holy persons to freak out!”

I dragged the resisting Cecily along and approached the location for the charity event.

—We arrived at the orphanage as the charity event was happening.

“(Gulp)... I see. She’s not here either... (Gulp)! Another bowl please. Fill it to the brim!!”

Cecily was stuffing her face with the food meant for the poor. She was thinking something seriously as she demanded another portion.

There should be a limit to one’s willfulness.

Were all the Axis Cultists like this?

“Correct. No such person participated in the charity events. But ‘watery blue hair’... There is a girl with watery blue hair who frequently comes to eat our food... Could she be who you are looking for...?”

A powerful and beautiful arch priest probably wouldn’t be eating food meant for charity.

It seemed it was a wasted trip.

I thanked the person helping out with the charity event.

Cecily said as she pressed on her bulging belly.

“Phew... Thanks for the treat. Miss Megumin. I always feel sleepy after eating. The arch priest should be in dreamland now. Let’s go back and sleep, okay?”

Th-This fellow!

—The remaining search location was the cemetery.

The surrounding was completely dark. An unspeakable mood permeated the communal cemetery on a hill far away from the city.

By the light of my lantern, Cecily and I stood in the middle of the communal cemetery. The wide cemetery was completely lifeless.

It was unacceptable for me to say it myself, but would there be an arch priest in this kind of place?

At the moment when I entertained such doubts.

“Ehhh!”

“Woahhhh!?”

Cecily suddenly shouted, and I followed suit!

I nearly dropped my lantern as I looked around in panic.

“W-What happened!? Did undead appear!?”

I said as I became more alert and covered Cecily who was behind me...!

“(Gurgle)! Miss Megumin really went ‘Woahhhh’! She even made a ‘Woahhhh’ sound! That’s really so cute! Ouch! Ouch!

Sorry, I'm just joking. I won't do it again. Stop quickly! Spare me!!"

I smacked her angrily with my staff. Chomsuke, who stayed close to my feet since we came from the city, suddenly raised its head to stare at a point in mid-air.

It was staring right behind Cecily and I.

I looked at the unmoving Chomsuke as it continued to stare...

"... Elder sister. Uh. Since you are a priestess, I have a request for you."

"W-What? Let me say it first. I can only use simple healing magic. My practice with Turn Undead isn't enough, and I can't remember the incantation well too."

What should I do? This person was totally unreliable.

... At this time, under the moonlight, there was another shadow falling at our feet from behind.

The shadow was about the size of a will-o'-the-wisp. It had a dangling motion...

"... Let's turn around at the count of three?"

"... I agree. If there is something there, we fight it together, okay?"

"Fine. Then, ready?"

I took a deep breath.

At the same time, there was a sound of something stepping on the ground.

“One, two, three!” X2

As we shouted, Cecily and I starting running without looking back.

“Wait, Miss Megumin. This isn’t what we agreed!”

“That’s my line! You are a holy person after all. You should stay behind to let a girl who is much younger than you escape!”

We argued as we ran next to each other. We ran all the way to the city without looking back!

“I’m your employer!”

“I didn’t receive the money yet. Besides, your request is to find a person, not to protect you!”

“W-Wait a moment...”

There seemed to be a weak and lonely voice speaking to us as we fled.

“—To-Too much... Ha... Ha...! To think that the naïve and cute Megumin from before would twist her personality to this manner?”

“I grew wiser after falling for your traps several times.”

When we arrived at the city gate, we panted and sat on the ground.

“By the way, I think I heard a female voice when we were running away... Could that be the arch priest we are looking for?”

Cecily fanned her face with her hand and replied.

“Nope. I peeked once before we left the cemetery. I saw a beautiful woman with wavy hair. She was pale like an undead. Under the moonlight....!”

“I understand. Stop saying it! I understand, so please don’t continue!”

PART 7

—The next morning after Cecily and I searched the city fruitlessly.

Yunyun waited in the guild until morning. She sprawled on the table, crying.

“(Sob)... (Sob)... Th-This won’t do...! I think in another hour, someone who saw my performance during the day would come and find me. Just wait a bit more. If I wait a bit more...!”

“In that case, you should have calculated the time that they would return instead of waiting until morning. How coy can you get!?”

The adventurers who rushed out of the guild back then did not return to the guild. They directly dispersed after searching.

Cecily, who was enthusiastic yesterday, stayed in the room in exhaustion today.

When I woke Cecily who was sleeping in my room, she said she was too worried about my personality change to sleep, so she wanted to take a nap and she went back to sleep.

Even if she said it was my fault, I knew that Cecily had been drinking in the tavern on the first floor of the hotel through the night.

Axis Cultists were really so carefree.

Didn’t they have rules and precepts in their dictionary?

Never mind. Since I accepted the request, I could not remain in a daze.

But to deal with that demon, there was no other options except to wait for the magic sword user to recover or find the legendary arch priest.

... I didn't know what to do, so I remained in a daze with Yunyun, who was still sprawled on the table.

“Oh. The wizard who is all-talk, what are you doing here? Didn't you join in the search for the arch priest?”

Rex, who was drinking beer early in the morning, said to me provocatively.

“Oh. Isn't this the master adventurer who fled with the wizard who is all-talk after witnessing the defeat of the magic sword user? What are you doing here? Are you so afraid of the demon that you are drinking early in the morning to drown your fears?”

“Oh...!? A little brat like you dare to say this!”

“Hey, who is a little brat? Make it clear. Depending on your answer, we may need to have a word outside!”

“Wait, Megumin. Don't fight within a minute of meeting each other! Sorry. She has been a bit frustrated since yesterday...!”

Yunyun hurriedly pacified us. Rex frowned.

“Ah, no... I should be the one who is sorry. I'm rather frustrated too. Ah. I couldn't find any lead to that arch priest. So I was picking a fight out of frustration. Sorry.”

Even master adventurers like them couldn't find her.

Or rather, every adventurer in the city couldn't find her.

Maybe it might be better to assume that the arch priest had left for other cities.

“Oh, right. I’m not just here to pick a fight. This is the main topic... Actually, we received some good news about that demon. I don’t know about your skills, but I have seen the power of that little girl over there... How about it? Want to join?”

Rex said with a grin.

—On the mountain road far from the city, there was an eye-witness report about a certain monster.

This probably was Rex’s “good news”.

“It’s about time you tell us. What monster is it?”

“Hehe. It’s a difficult monster for rookie adventurers. Go back now if you are scared. It’s not impossible for the three of us to deal with it anyway.”

Yunyun and I followed Rex’s party towards the foot of the mountain.

Terry was holding some ropes, while the horse was pulling a huge cage.

“The clue is a large black monster. You were the ones who reported about the demon, right? I heard that demon is looking for a large black magical beast, right?”

Hearing Sophie’s explanation, my face turned pale.

Yunyun stopped moving. From her look, it seemed she was also thinking of the same thing.

“Uh— So the monster that we are looking for now is...”

“Oh. It seems you have guessed it. Yes. It’s the Rookie Killer.”

Yunyun and I made a right turn and went back the way we came.

Rookie Killer.

True to its name, it was a monster said to be the bane of rookie adventurers.

“Hey, hey. Aren’t you Crimson Magic Clansmen who are the elites among wizards!? Although I said you should go back if you are afraid, what are we going to do if you really go back!?”

“It is exactly because we are the elites among wizards! A Rookie Killer is cunning and suspicious. It is also very agile. Its intelligence is very high and it occasionally sets up an ambush. And it has the habit of attacking the weaker targets first. When it is encountered, physically weak wizards are often killed off first.”

“It’s agile and can appear before you in a blink of an eye. Even having a rearguard is pointless. And we are low level rookies...”

Thus, it was a troublesome monster for wizards.

Yes. As low level wizards, we were the ideal prey for the Rookie Killer.

“No problem. We have hunted Rookie Killers several times. I hope you can use some magic when we capture the Rookie Killer. We will protect you. Don’t worry.”

Rex said it so casually, but could this muscle-brained guy

really defend against the ambush of a Rookie Killer...?

“—In other words, I just need to use sleep magic when it is being captured, right? But what do you intend to do after capturing the Rookie Killer?”

Rex pointed to the metal cage with his thumb and said.

“Of course, we are going to bring it back to the city after trapping it in a cage. That demon is looking for a large black magical beast. At the same time, someone witnessed the appearance of the Rookie Killer here. We can probably conclude that the demon is looking for it? This should be that demon’s pet.”

In other words, the captured Rookie Killer could be used as bait or bargaining chip.

“After banishing the demon or driving it away from the forest near the city, we can share the reward provided by the guild. How about it? This is not a bad deal, right?”

Rex said with a grin.

PART 8

A Rookie Killer frequently hid itself near a community of trash monsters like goblins or kobolds.

Goblins and kobolds were attractive targets for rookie adventurers to gain experience.

So the Rookie Killer used goblins and kobolds as bait to lure those adventurers out.

In other words, if we wanted to capture a Rookie Killer...!

“Blade of Wind!”

“Well done! That’s Crimson Magic Clan for you. So powerful! Good. You guys join in!”

Rex swung his two-handed sword and charged into the midst of the goblins.

Sophie followed closely behind with her spear. Only Terry remained to protect us with his battle axe.

They seemed to deserve their reputation as master adventurers.

In a blink of an eye, Rex and the others finished off more than 10 goblins and switched to a defensive position.

A Rookie Killer would habitually stay near the goblin community to bait adventurers.

After an attack on the goblins, if there was a Rookie Killer nearby...

“Behind you, Terry!”

As Rex shouted, the bushes behind us moved violently and a black shadow pounced over.

The black shadow was charging at Yunyun, but it was immediately blocked by Terry who moved in front of her.

“(Growl)!”

“C-Come at me!!”

As Terry confronted the Rookie Killer, Yunyun speedily finished her incantation....!

“Sleep!”

She pointed her staff at the Rookie Killer. The huge black body lay down on the ground without resistance.

“Woah!” X3

Rex and the others cheered for the easy successful capture.

They surrounded the unmoving Rookie Killer.

“You are Yunyun, right? You are really capable! Do you want to join our party directly?”

“Yes. Such a powerful wizard is quite rare. How about it? I’m present, so this isn’t a male-only party. It shouldn’t be that uncomfortable, right?”

“Our party is full of muscular fools who have frontline jobs. It would be great if we can have a wizard!”

“Eh!? A-Are you talking about me!?”

After being praised, Yunyun blushed and behaved suspiciously.

She was waiting for an invitation for so long. Now that she was being officially invited, she panicked.

Yunyun looked to me for help, but this was truly a form of training.

Just leave her be.

“Never mind. We can discuss the party issue later in the city. Firstly, we must bring this thing back.”

“Right. If it is locked in a cage near the city, the demon would take the initiative to negotiate, right? If it is a greater demon, it should have high intelligence and could probably communicate. Megumin spoke to that demon before, right?”

“Yes. How should I say this? Now that I think about it, that demon seemed rather friendly, but...”

We had successfully captured the Rookie Killer.

Now, we just had to return to the city and wait for the demon to come.

“What? Is there any concern? ... By the way, during the previous expedition and this current mission, you are still a wizard who is all talk and no action. Can’t you contribute anything?”

Rex grinned and mocked me.

Hearing this, I was so enraged that the arteries on my head were about to burst. Being impulsive and easily provoked was my bad habit.

And I was still a bit concerned.

The opponent is a greater demon. Even if we had the pet that it was searching for, would things really develop so smoothly?

... Or rather, I felt that something was wrong.

The black magical beast might not be referring to the Rookie Killer...

“Never mind. Whatever it is, let’s go back to the city to celebrate our success...”

As Rex ignored my discomfort and continued speaking...

“I found it——!!!”

A voice loud enough to drown out Rex’s words surrounded us.

PART 9

For the moment, I couldn't comprehend what that loud voice was.

As everyone stood still, it suddenly appeared.

“You people! What did you do to Lady Wolbach!?”

It was a huge pitch-black and glossy body.

It should have had two bat wings, but there was only one left now.

With an air of misfortune, its horns and teeth left a deep impression.

There was no mistake. It was that greater demon from before.

That demon from the forest charged at us in rage!

“Hey! Hey, wait. The Rookie Killer is still in our hands... Ugh!?”

“Ugh!!”

“!?”

The three persons surrounding the Rookie Killer were knocked off their feet by the demon that suddenly emerged from the forest at the foot of the mountain. They didn't even have the time to draw their weapons.

Or rather, for someone like me who wasn't proficient in melee combat, I didn't even know what happened to them in that moment.

The three of them were scattered into the distance and collapsed on the ground motionlessly.

The demon kneeled beside the Rookie Killer—

“Lady Wolbach! Please wake up, Lady Wolbach!!”

It kept calling this familiar name.

Eh... Wolbach?

“I say, Megumin. This is a crisis, right? What should we do? Will he just let us go...?”

As I was about to recall that name, Yunyun was shivering and pulling on my sleeve.

“Shh. Let’s watch what happens next. Maintain a defensive position and slowly move away.”

Step by step, we increased the distance between us and the demon who was still trying to wake the Rookie Killer.

At this moment, the demon suddenly stared blankly in bewilderment.

Since its form looked so fierce, that behavior seemed extremely strange.

“Hey... Hey, hey, hey. This is just a normal Rookie Killer. What is happening?”

The demon mumbled to itself and stood up. Its glass-like, lifeless eyes turned on us.

“!?” X2

As our eyes met, I felt fear like never before.

This fellow was bad news, really bad news.

I knew that with just a glance.

It was even more powerful than the greater demon Anis that I fought previously.

Suddenly, I remembered.

“Hey, both of you. What is the matter with this fellow? I caught the scent of Lady Wolbach and rushed over... Damn. From a distance, I thought it was Lady Wolbach.”

The name Wolbach was mentioned by Anis several times...

“Anyway, why is Lady Wolbach’s scent on you? What is your relationship with Lady Wolbach?”

As we slowly retreated, the demon before us crossed its arms and began to ponder.

... There was no mistake.

This demon was after my familiar, Chomsuke.

I wanted to say that was my familiar for you, but now wasn’t the time to be happy.

We must somehow resolve this situation...!

At the moment when I held onto my staff and started my incantation slowly...

The demon closed the distance between us with a speed that should be impossible for its size.

“... Hm. The scent is extremely strong on you. And it’s fresh. It should be about this morning.”

The demon sniffed at my clothes.

Its scary face came close to me, making me want to flee in fear.

As the demon sniffed all over my body, I remembered Chomsuke was climbing all over me this morning.

When I returned, I should bundle that fur ball up.

“Hey, say something. By the way, I think we should have met. You are the Crimson Magic Clansman I encountered previously in the forest, right?”

Hearing the demon’s question, Yunyun and I did not answer, but we merely nodded.

The demon saw our reactions and nodded in satisfaction.

“Is that so... The seal was previous in the Home of the Crimson Magic and you are both Crimson Magic Clansmen. Yes. This is reasonable. This is really reasonable!”

I didn’t know what was responsible, but if that fearsome face came close again, I would cry, so please stop.

Or rather, Yunyun was already on the verge of tears beside me.

“Hey, you! Since you are a Crimson Magic Clansman, you should know about Lady Wolbach, right? Don’t tell me otherwise. You should have met her this morning.”

Feeling the killing intent of the demon, I sensed that our lives were in danger.

“Wh-Why do you all keep calling my Chomsuke a weird name like Wolbach? You must have made a mistake. Let me find a

cute black kitten for you. Please don't bother my Chomsuke anymore!"

"Ch-Chomsuke? What the heck is Chomsuke... No, wait. I heard this name somewhere before. Where was it? ... Oh, right. It was that brat...!"

Who was that brat?

As Yunyun and I were paralyzed by fear, the demon seemed to have resolved its confusion. It shook its head several times and sighed.

"If possible, I don't want to antagonize Crimson Magic Clan... Otherwise, that brat might pounce over to bite me... Now, listen up. Bring Lady Wolbach here. If you don't know who is Lady Wolbach, bring everyone you were in contact with this morning. How about it? I will make a deal with you. Bring Lady Wolbach to me and I will not harm any of you. Of course, it includes everyone in that city too."

"Y-You want us to believe the words of a demon!?"

Yunyun, who was scared out of her wits so far, gripped her staff tightly after knowing that the enemy's target was Chomsuke.

"Wait a moment. We demons do not break our contracts. This is an unbreakable rule for demons. And I intend to communicate with you people in a very friendly manner. Even though I made the strange magic sword guy suffer, but that was inevitable. That guy was on our hit list after all."

I reached out to stop Yunyun, who was about to start her incantation.

"Hit list? You mean the famous magic sword user in the city is

wanted by name among demons?"

The demon answered my query.

"Yes. I haven't introduce myself. My name is Hoost. I'm the aide of Lady Wolbach, the greater demon Hoost. A magic sword user who could destroy gods would be considered a dangerous target anywhere, right?"

PART 10

Yunyun pulled the reins of the horse.

“Hey, are you going to deal with that demon?”

“... I haven’t decided. But if giving that fur ball away could solve the problem, it might not be a bad option.”

After all, the opponent wasn’t an ordinary greater demon, but an aide to the evil god.

If we made matters worse, we would surely be like that defeated magic sword user.

Yunyun became silent after hearing what I said.

Rex and the others were still sleeping in the cage that was being pulled along by the horse.

The two of us couldn’t move them to the city by ourselves, so we could only put them in the cage.

The three of them were still unconscious.

Master adventurers were instantaneously defeated without being able to counter-attack.

The deal was to give it Chomsuke and it wouldn’t harm us and the city.

In other words, if we didn’t accept the deal, even the innocent people in the city would be harmed.

This time, we couldn’t expect someone to help out at the right time, like what happened in the Home of the Crimson

Magic or Alcanretia.

Even Rex's party was defeated, the people in Axel who could oppose that demon were—

The horse pulled the cage along as its wheels made a rumbling sound.

As we were about to reach the city gate...

Yunyun said with an unrepentant look.

"Hey, Megumin. Let's ignore what that demon said. Since it is a demon, it might not keep to the agreement. Besides, even if they are rookies, there are still a lot of reliable adventurers in the city, so..."

Yunyun made a rare opinion this time. She was a kind and righteous person who would help others even if it disadvantaged herself.

She must have grown and accumulated quite a bit of experience.

Let's leave aside whether it was in a good way or not.

She was a bit wiser now about the ways of the world, but I was still worried that she would befriend delinquents in the future...

I did not reply. After passing through the main gate, I glanced to the side of the road.

The two people that I met frequently were happily swinging their picks today.

If I ran away, this unreliable duo at the city gate, who were living happily and peacefully every day, would surely be

dragged into the mess.

—My hand that was holding the staff naturally strengthened its grip.

INTERLUDE: SCENE 3

—A Lonely Girl Who Was Awakened—

Previously, an unusual event finally happened— even an Axis Cultist rejected me when I offered to join their cult.

If it was the old me, I would be depressed when something like that happened. Now, I merely stayed at my reserved spot in the corner of the Adventurer's Guild...

“In other words, do not try to solve a problem in a single move. It is better to investigate the reasons and remove the obstacles one by one, right?”

“That's right, my disciple. If you desire speed too much, you won't reach your destination. Work at it steadily and things would be unexpectedly easy to resolve.”

And received lecture from someone I now regarded as mentor.

“But, mentor. I don't even know what are the reasons...”

My mentor gave me a calming smile as I remained moody.

“Leave it to me. Let's think about it together. No problem, it will be successful... I'm thirsty after talking so much. Can I have some beer?”

“Yes please!”

My mentor ordered a mug of beer and happily finished it in one gulp.

“...Ha— Where were we? Ah, right. You couldn’t find any companion.”

“Yes. I can’t take the initiative to talk to strangers... How can I be like you? To be able to talk casually with anyone!?”

My mentor was rather famous in the guild, or at least a lot of people would recognize him.

“Well, you can do it while drunk. Alcohol is a good thing. Alcohol can bring delights to life, my disciple. Can I have another mug?”

“As you wish! But, mentor, I think I’m still too young to drink beer... Is there any other way?”

My mentor ordered his Nth mug of beer for today. He took a sip and breathed out.

“Other way huh! Okay, wait a bit. I think I will have a good idea after finishing this mug.”

“Mentor, have another mug!”

—An hour later.

“—I can’t drink anymore...”

“Mentor, can you tell me now? How can I make friends and companions!?”

I shook my drunk mentor. He said while still sprawled on the table.

“Even if you ask me that... Right! Little girl, you look well developed. If you wear clothes that exposed more cleavage, using sexiness...”

My mentor raised his head and grinned, then his entire body suddenly shivered.

“No, no, no. It’s a joke. I’m just joking! I see that you are obediently listening to me, so I wanted to test if you will really accept my opinion...! Of course, it’s also a little joke that I will teach you if you buy me a drink! I will pay for my drinks. I will even pay for yours!”

“That doesn’t matter!”

“Eh! S-Sorry! Don’t be so angry. Your eyes are turning red! I was overdoing it. I’m really sorry!”

As I slammed on the table, my mentor said fearfully.

But this wasn’t what I wanted to ask!

“That doesn’t matter! Mentor, please tell me how I can make friends and companions! Please, I’m very frustrated. I implore you!!”

“E-E-Even if you implore me like this!”

As I was getting emotional, my eyes had already turned crimson, but I couldn’t care about that now.

It was so hard to find a consultant, so I wouldn’t let him escape!

“Uh... On the notice board...”

“Notice board!?”

My mentor whispered in significant shock.

“Make a post on the notice board to say, say that you are looking for friends and you will pay for your friends’

expenses... or such... I-I'm joking. I will think seriously. Very sorry!"

Before my mentor could finish, I pulled on his sleeve causing his voice to reach a higher pitch. He was on the verge of tears.

"Thank you very much for your guidance. This is not a bad idea! I will try it out!!"

"Eh!"

After coming up with such a good idea, my mentor cried out in surprise for some reasons.

CHAPTER 4 - EXPLOSIVE GIRL OF AXEL

第四章

アカセルの魔導魔女



PART 1

After being attacked by Hoost, Rex and the others were luckily not badly hurt.

After sending them to Eris Church, we went to the Adventurer's Guild.

—Fine.

“Megumin, listen to me. Demons are evil and cunning. They are the most untrustworthy creatures in the world. You must have heard of it, right? The famous story about exchanging one's soul for three wishes! Supposedly, several wizards lost their souls without having their wishes properly granted!”

I had already made my decision.

“The deal with that fellow is definitely unreliable. Once you hand Chomsuke over, he will immediately go back on his word...!”

After that, I needed to deal with this...

“Megumin, your type of character is the best prey in the eyes of demons! I feel that if he says to you, ‘Let me grant you the power of darkness...’, you would blindly follow that demon!”

This wench had been lecturing me all this while, engaging in a monologue!

“I don't want to hear it from someone who would blindly follow a stranger after being treated gently! What is the meaning of this!? I'm the top genius of the Home of the Crimson Magic! I don't need to be lectured by the lonely girl

“Lonely girl who is forever Number 2! I know all those things!”

“Lonely girl who is forever Number 2!!”

Yunyun was on the verge of tears as she strangled me. After I disengaged her with some effort, I reached out my hand to calm her down.

“W-Wait. This is a big misunderstanding! I exaggerated when I said ‘lonely girl’. After all, since arriving in the city, you have gotten to know a strange old man and a guy who flirts with girls in broad daylight. You have all kinds of friends. I’ll upgrade you to easy girl who is forever Number 2.”

“... I think ‘lonely girl’ is better...”

I thought about my own circumstances. I held Yunyun’s weeping face with both hands and said.

“Okay, let’s have a chat. I should find some time to deal with your social awkwardness. If I keep ignoring it, I feel you would make some delinquent friends.”

I said as I opened the door to the Adventurer’s Guild together with Yunyun, who was still snuffling.

“—In summary, Rex’s party was defeated by that demon.”

“What should we do now!?” X3

My report sent the guild staff into a panic. I dragged Yunyun to a table further in the guild.

“Okay. As expected, the guild is not dependable now. Let’s evaluate our current situation.”

Yunyun and I started our duo strategy meeting at a table in the corner.

“Current situation... The two most powerful parties in the city were defeated. The life-saving arch priest cannot be found. The country and other cities are on high alert because Dullahan, a leader of the demon king’s army, is currently active. Thus, they cannot send any reinforcement. And finally, that demon... is called Hoost? Anyway, there is no deadline for our response and trade, but I feel he won’t wait patiently though.”

Yunyun said with a painful expression.

Since there would be no reinforcement from other cities, the situation wouldn’t improve if we ignore the issue.

And the life-saving arch priest could not be found.

Then...

“Then the only option left is handing Chomsuke over... But I object strongly to this! Even I have developed some feelings for that kid. We can’t hand it over so easily!”

Yunyun said angrily and suddenly picked up Chomsuke, who was scratching itself on the table. I was puzzled by her.

“... You really misunderstood. I never said I agree to the deal.”

“Eh!? B-But on the way back to the city, you looked troubled and were deep in thought... Ah, could it be...”

“Oh please. How could I possibly yield to threats? Crimson Magic Clansmen always accept a direct challenge. I have made my resolve. That is... the resolve to defeat that demon!”

“But even powerful parties like those of the famous magic sword user and Mr. Rex were easily defeated! And when we

first met that fellow, you were so frightened! Megumin, you are just one step away from being an idiot. Surely you realize the difference in power between yourself and the opponent!?”

“Why are you being so sarcastic!? It’s obvious that the demon is very powerful. It is probably even greater than Anis. But I have a way to destroy that demon. Or rather, with that legendary arch priest missing, I’m the only one in this city who can oppose that demon.”

Hearing my words, Yunyun clenched her fists in silence.

Then she slammed the table and stood up...!

“I... I don’t care anymore! Megumin, you idiot... Ugh!?”

As Yunyun was about to run off somewhere, I pulled on her cloak, causing her to turn back.

I smiled gleefully at Yunyun who was coughing in confusion.

“... We are friends, right?”

“You are asking me to help!? You want me to help, right!? We are rivals, not friends! If you think that I will do everything obediently just because you say we are friends, then you are wrong! But I’m very dissatisfied with myself for feeling happy about it!!”

PART 2

I came to a certain place together with Yunyun, who was still pouting.

“I’m not a fool. I won’t think of directly challenge that kind of enemy. Thus, I need to acquire some expedition fund first.”

“... Expedition fund? But isn’t this where we live...”

Yes. This was our usual hotel.

“It’s slightly dangerous, so you shouldn’t come. Please spend some time nearby.”

“...? I don’t mind, but if there’s danger... No. I-I say, Megumin. How do you intend to get expedition fund...!?”

“It’s best for you not to ask. Then, I’m going!”

“W-Wait! Could it be that you are really going to use your body...!!”

Hearing Yunyun’s voice behind me, I walked upstairs to a certain room in the hotel.

Then I took a deep breath before the door.

I strengthened my resolve and knocked twice on the door. A familiar voice came from within.

“Please enter.”

I opened the door and saw Cecily sprawling on the bed and munching on some snacks.

As I entered the room, I put my hands together in a praying pose and said.

“Sis Cecily, please give me some money!”

“Tell your elder sister how much you need! What do you want to buy? A house? Want to buy a house and live together with elder sister? No problem. See how I use my charms to seduce some rich adventurers!”

I hurriedly stopped Cecily who was about to rush out of the room.

“Nothing as exaggerated as buying a house! No. I want to defeat that demon, so I need some expedition fund. I remember you said that if that demon is defeated, there’s a reward of 10,000,000, right? Can I borrow a bit of that money?”

“I did say that before. Although I was the one who made the request, I think it’s better to give up now. I received additional information on that demon... Just earlier, one of the more powerful parties in this city was attacked by it and was sent to Eris Church.”

Cecily said with a troubled look.

“I just reported to the guild, yet you have heard of it already. This means that the people in the city are agitated to that extent...”

“No. I saw the wounded were being healed when I went to throw rocks at the Eris Church. I pestered them and said I won’t leave until they tell me what happened, so they gave me all the details... Wait. I couldn’t endure it even if you shower love on me like this!”

“Sigh. Elder sister, please be more amiable! Don’t mess up the situation!!”

“(Cough)... Really. You are being coy again, but I don’t dislike it though!”

Cecily tried to pacify me as I strangled her by handing something over.

“Who is being coy!? You should... This?”

She handed over a heavy sack.

“10,000,000 eris.”

“Eh!?”

Hearing her casual words, I stared dumbly at the sack in my hand.

“I-Is this really okay!? You gave it to me so easily! Aren’t you afraid I would run off with it!?”

Cecily listened to my queries.

“I’m a holy person after all. I have some confidence in judging the character of people.”

She said with a gentle smile.

“Th-Then, didn’t you consider what would happen if I lose? By the way, did the sun rise from the west? You suddenly have such an attitude. I don’t even know how to respond... Ugh!”

She then hugged me tightly.

“No problem. As the priestess of Axis Cult, I, Cecily, make this guarantee. You will definitely win. That’s right. A cute and

reliable Miss Megumin won't possibly lose to demons."

"El-Elder sis..."

What should I do? I was a bit upset about it, but my eyes still became wet.

Actually, I was uneasy about challenging such a powerful demon.

At this time, I unexpectedly received such gentle words from someone who was usually unreliable...

"Okay. Open the sack and take a look. Please use these things properly!"

I struggled to hold back my tears and opened the heavy sack...

—There wasn't any gold coin inside. It was full of rocks and a piece of paper which said, "Just joking".

"Ha! Miss Megumin has been tearfully stunned. It's really too cute! Haha. (Cough)... Really, why are you so cute!? Too bad, that's... Ah, it's my fault! I went overboard with the joke. I will apologize, so please stop throwing rocks!!"



PART 3

After going downstairs, I saw Yunyun worriedly walking back and forth like a bear.

“What are you doing, Yunyun? I told you to spend some time nearby.”

“Megumin! You entered the hotel after leaving some meaningful statements, so I was very worried... Wait. Why are you crying!?”

After being noticed by Yunyun, I quickly wiped my tears away.

“Th-This is—! No-Nothing!”

“Why is strong-willed Megumin crying!? What happened!? You used that to acquire the so-called expedition fund!?”

I held on to my collars with both hands and shook them for Yunyun to see.

“Here is 10,000,000 eris...”

“What did you do to earn a large sum of money like 10,000,000 eris!?”

Yunyun was on the verge of tears for some reason as she cried out in despair.

“Please stop and calm down! This is just a practical joke since I trust Miss Megumin! I knew that Miss Megumin would surely resolve this issue! So I specially prepared this to pull a prank on you when I give you the thank-you gift... Ah. Stop, stop.

Don't be angry!!"

I thought of what Cecily said earlier—

"... I don't want to talk about it."

"Megumin, Megumin has been violated!"

I walked out of the hotel in exhaustion. I didn't even have the mood to explain things to Yunyun who was having some strange misunderstanding.

"—I say, Megumin. Whatever happened has happened. Your reason for needing money is to defeat the demon that threatens the city. This is a righteous cause, so there is no shame in whatever method you used to get money. Nobody will look down on you."

.....

"Yes. After all, the one who is depressed is Megumin. Even the strong-willed Megumin would cry, so... so... Ugh..."

"You are too irritating! Really. You are too imaginative. You are always like that!! I didn't sell my body. I only said something embarrassing to someone who has good feelings towards me. And I was tightly hugged!"

"You said something embarrassing and was hugged!? I-I think this was too much already, but was that all that happened? Would Megumin cry merely because of that?"

I considered what she said.

"After that... I was overwhelmed by the sudden gentle treatment, and I was somewhat played after that... This is rather embarrassing, so I rather not talk about it."

“As I thought!!”

... I should just ignore it.

“Anyway, since I got the expedition fund, we should make use of them efficiently so that the fight would be advantageous to us. I need to go somewhere, so take this with you to the magic tool shop. Buy everything you think is useful. If you think there are other expenditures that benefit the fight, spend as you wish. And... buy a black cat doll for me.”

I said and stuff the sack full of gold coins into her hands.

“Eh!? E-Even if you say so, suddenly giving me so much money...!”

And I left the rest to the bewildered Yunyun—

PART 4

“Please. If we get the reward, you can have it all!”

“Do-Don’t be unreasonable. It’s that demon, right!? Even the magic sword guy and Rex’s party were defeated, this is too much for us!”

I returned to the Adventurer’s Guild and approached various adventurers.

“Ah. Over there... I forgot your names, but we were in a party once! Then, you should know how powerful I can be. Want to defeat the demon together!?”

“At least remember our names! No, no. We refuse precisely because we were in a party before. I feel we would be dragged into your magic as well...”

“R-Right. And it’s all over if your magic misses. We can’t go along with such a dangerous gambit.”

Da-Damn it!

“Ah. You there! Need an excellent wizard? I am a Crimson Magic Clansman! I can be useful, so please help me...”

“No way. We can’t deal with that demon! And we are small fries with elementary jobs. If a Crimson Magic Clan’s arch wizard joins us, the party would be somewhat unbalanced, right?”

Even after I discarded my self-respect and begged everyone, nobody accepted my request. This was because everyone knew of my bad reputation and the power of that demon.

My plan was to let Yunyun acquire some magic items that could restrict movements and then employ some defensive adventurers.

If Hoost's movement could be restricted, it would be ideal. Even if we couldn't defeat it, we could buy the employed adventurers some time and increase the distance for a one-hit kill.

I thought that would work, but I was too naïve.

... At this moment.

“Uh—“

Someone spoke to me fearfully from behind.

“You are the one who is always with that girl called Yunyun, right? We are not that strong, but if it is possible—“

I quickly turned towards the speaker...!

“Power doesn't matter as long as you are willing to help. Oh, it's you people! I'm looking for adventurers. This is too dangerous for commoners, so please stand aside! And don't come close to Yunyun again!!“

It was the idle uncle who would be drunk in broad daylight and approach Yunyun for chat, as well as other similar men.

As I drove them off, the guild became noisy.

... What was happening?

I asked a random person nearby.

“Uh, what is happening?”

“Hm. It’s the matter with that demon. Some weirdos declared they wanted to defeat it. It was just a party with two members, yet they suddenly rushed out of the guild. Woah!? Wh-What are you doing!?”

“Where are they!? What do those two people look like!?”

“O-One of them should be a crusader? The other should be a thief... Both of them were shouting scary things like ‘Demons should die’ and ‘For a demon to come boldly to this city, watch me kill it!’. They went off after that.”

If I came earlier, I could have invited those people...!

No. Perhaps they would unexpectedly defeat it.

“Sigh. In the end, I couldn’t find anyone. This is going to be difficult...”

PART 5

“How are things on your side? Found any useful magic items?”

“I went to various magic tool shops and bought several powerful magic items recommended by the shops, but...”

Yunyun said and took out some magic items that looked really familiar.

“... They are doubtlessly created in the Home of the Crimson Magic.”

“... After all, the magic items created in our village are considered high quality...”

It was somewhat discomforting to buy the magic items at full prices when we could have acquired them easily back in our village. However, since the products were made by our villagers, we could be assured of the quality.

“By the way, where did you go? Were preparing for the fight?”

Hearing this, I looked away.

“I wanted to find some helpers... but my recent fame had an opposite effect. Nobody responded...”

“It’s because of your usual behavior! No helper huh? What should we do? If wizards have no frontline fighter, we would be killed instantly by melee attacks!?”

I picked up Chomsuke who was pestering my feet as if I

wanted to avoid reality.

“Who do you think I am? Yes. I’m the top wizard of Crimson Magic Clan, user of Explosion magic! I could finish that kind of demon off before it comes close... Ah! Well done, Yunyun! Isn’t this an invisibility spell scroll? It would be easy with this!”

“I bought it anyway, but I don’t know if it would really be useful. The opponent is a greater demon. Party tricks like becoming invisible by deflecting light may be exposed anytime...”

Yunyun mumbled, but this was better than having no plan of action.

I carefully kept the scroll.

“And the black cat doll that you asked for. I don’t know how this thing would be useful...”

I tied Chomsuke in my arms to the doll.

“Hey!”

“In this way, the doll would have Chomsuke’s scent. After that, we will place this in the middle of somewhere nobody would come. I will hide with the invisibility scroll. When it was lured over by the doll, BOOM!”

“Wo-Would it proceed so smoothly... I say, it’s still not too late. Let’s escape to another city...”

... It was unbelievable that Yunyun, who used to be so kind-hearted, would become so callous in less than a year.

Unknowingly, this kid had grown in various ways.

For now, let's disregard whether it was a good way or not.

I showed Chomsuke, who was bound to the doll, to the anxious Yunyun and said.

“It will be successful. You are not the only one who has developed feelings for this shameless fur ball.”

Besides...

“Although it was only for a short time, there are people in this city who have adventured with me. This incident is because of me and this fur ball, so I must put an end to it!”

Watching my silhouette as I made my declaration and turned towards the hotel, Yunyun sighed helplessly.

“Really. So reckless, so stubborn, and so over-assertive.”

“Stop nagging. You are still a pacifist coward, right?”

I replied without turning back. There was a sound of someone taking a deep breath.

Then...

“... But you have changed a lot this year in terms of individualism and callousness.”

Yunyun seemed to be mumbling something softly.

PART 6

After dinner, I returned to my room. I suddenly thought of something and knocked on Cecily's door.

"Elder sister, are you there?"

"Yes? Miss Megumin? Please come in. The door isn't locked."

After opening the door, I saw Cecily lying on the bed lazily.

"You look rather tired. Where were you playing after that?"

"So rude. I was motivated by hardworking Megumin, so I did some rare work too."

Oh really...

"So may I ask what kind of work was it?"

"Uh. I went to Eris Church again..."

"Enough."

I was so stupid to ask that question.

"Wait!? I really worked hard today!? I can only use simple healing magic, but in other words, this is my sole area of expertise! Then..."

"Enough. Then you waited for the wounded to arrive at the Eris Church and ran over to intercept their business, right?"

"Miss Megumin is too much! That...! That... Eh? Actually, that isn't a bad idea. Let me write it down."

“Do it later. I have something to discuss with you.”

I showed Chomsuke, who was released from the back cat doll, to Cecily as she was busy taking notes.

“I wish to leave this kid with you for a while.”

“... I don’t mind, but isn’t this the symbol of your cuteness? Is it okay to leave it with me?”

“It’s not a symbol. It’s my familiar. We may start the fight tomorrow, so I’m making this request just to be safe.”

I put Chomsuke down on the bed that Cecily was lying on.

Cecily ruffled its head as Chomsuke sniffed at her as if intrigued by a stranger’s scent.

“This is a small matter. Leave it to me. I’ll teach it some tricks while I take care of it. Hm. How about a fire-breathing cat?”

“Pl-Please don’t! Don’t teach it strange things!? Then, elder sister...”

“Call me Sis Cecily!”

“... Ce-Cecily, I’ll leave that kid to you.”

Cecily seemingly accepted my ultimate compromise.

I watched Cecily play with Chomsuke on the bed and left her room.

“—Ah!? Megumin, what are you doing in that place!?”

After leaving Cecily’s room, I ran into Yunyun as she was about to leave for some place.

“There is an acquaintance in this room. Yunyun, where are you going at this time?”

Hearing my question, she looked away suspiciously.

“L-Look. We are adventurers too, so I thought it’s nice to visit the tavern at night.”

“Yunyun has become a delinquent!”

“No. It’s not like that! I’m just a bit curious!?”

Yunyun hurriedly responded as I cried out in surprise.

“... Let’s go together then. Letting the easily persuaded Yunyun go to the tavern alone at night is like letting a group of Onion Ducks walk pass me when I haven’t use Explosion magic for the day.”

“N-No need to come along! Look. I stayed overnight at the guild previously. Nothing happened!”

Yunyun insisted on refusing my company.

“Then, see you tomorrow!”

And rushed out into the streets at night.

PART 7

“... I can’t sleep.”

The battle would be tomorrow.

Perhaps due to the nervousness, I found it difficult to fall asleep.

Just a year ago, I was still going to school peacefully. How did I end up having to fight a greater demon?

Thinking back, I had experienced a lot of adventures in the past year.

Breaking the seal of the evil god, defeating the evil god’s minions, and fighting with the greater demon Anis.

And then now I’m defending Axel City and preparing to fight with the demon Hoost.

My life hereafter as an adventurer probably wouldn’t have such a major event again.

What surprised me was that adventurers were people who frequently took on normal quests to make ends meet.

The odd party that would be willing to recruit me probably did not exist. Even if Hoost was defeated successfully, I would still...

I thought about this in the darkness and tucked my head beneath the blanket.

This was not good. My line of thought was becoming bleaker.

Truly, was I becoming more negative because of tomorrow's event?

As I thought on this, I noticed the sky was starting to brighten outside the window.

Or rather, it was today. I was wide awake such that I couldn't sleep at all.

I felt as if I had forgotten something very important...

What was it? I said to myself, something very important... Eh, ah!

I forgot my daily practice of using Explosion magic!

No wonder I couldn't sleep. As I was about to get up...

“Unlock.”

A whisper was heard from outside the door. The room became unlocked.

What kind of pervert would pry open the room's lock at this time?

Cecily's appearance naturally flashed across my mind. I turned my back to the door and pretended to sleep as I clenched my fist to strike at the intruder anytime.

Finally, the door was gently opened.

“... Megumin, are you asleep?”

I heard a soft, familiar voice. My clenched fist relaxed.

The intruder was Yunyun.

What was this about? Why would she sneak into my room at this time?

It didn't matter if I was awake, but for some reasons, I chose to pretend to be asleep.

“... Megumin. You are very amazing. Faced with that demon, you still refused to run away. If it was me, I definitely would be so troubled that I couldn't sleep.”

I shouldn't have pretended to be asleep.

After hearing this, it was more awkward for me to get up now...

As I was regretting my decision, Yunyun continued her monologue softly.

“I'm being honest. When you learned Explosion magic, I thought this so-called 'top genius' was mentally retarded.”

I wanted to pounce at her.

“And then, when you were helping those Axis Cultists in Alcanretia with their foolish recruitment schemes... Really, really...”

At this point, Yunyun's voice ceased.

... Those times were my dark history, so I wished there weren't too many reminders.

“—But.”

Since my back was facing her in the dark, I wondered what Yunyun's expressions were like now.

“But with only the useless Explosion magic, you destroyed

the evil god's minions in one shot and then defeated Anis. Now, you even plan to oppose that demon..."

Although I couldn't see her, her current expression must be—

"I think the current Megumin is really cool, really powerful."

Must be really bashful.

... Yes. Just like the current me.

If I got up now after hearing her monologue, Yunyun would receive a deep psychological scar.

But if I didn't say anything after hearing such honest confession, it was also...



“But Megumin, you should know it too. Even if you hide with invisibility magic to use Explosion magic, your position would still be exposed by your mana leakage.”

... At this moment, I couldn't say that I didn't even think about that.

As I was feeling embarrassed and dispirited...

“Therefore...”

Yunyun's tone suddenly changed.

“So that I can continue to be Megumin's rival, I will borrow this.”

Yunyun said softly in a serious tone and picked something up.

Even if I couldn't see, I could guess what it was.

It was probably the doll with Chomsuke's scent, prepared as a bait for Hoost.

Did she intend to lure and defeat Hoost before I could arrive?

But Yunyun shouldn't have the finishing move to defeat Hoost.

No matter what, it was too reckless for her to do it alone.

“I was in the tavern of the Adventurer's Guild until now... For the first time, I took the initiative to ask to join a party.”

.....

“And it was one of the top adventuring parties in the city. Mr.

Rex's party. When I said I wanted revenge on that demon, they readily agreed."

Those people?

But they should be badly wounded...

"If I was alone, I probably don't have the courage to challenge it, but like this..."

I listened to Yunyun's confession and considered when I should get up.

"Then I'm leaving."

It was about time.

I pretended to wake up and greeted her sleepily—

"Because you are my most important friend. I knew we would lose, so I can't let you go on a suicide mission. Therefore..."

... I was speechless. As I considered how I should respond...

"Sorry, Megumin."

Following the soft-spoken apology,

"Sleep."

An irresistible sleep magic assaulted me—

PART 8

“——!!”

I jumped out of my bed as I woke up.

As I quickly took note of my surrounding, I noticed that the sky outside was completely bright.

Then as an evidence that it was not a dream, the black cat doll at the side of my bed was missing.

“You really did it! From the start, you were scheming against me, Yunyun!!”

Before anything else, the first thought in my mind was that I was upset at falling for her trap.

She left early with a powerful party to defeat Hoost because she was worried about me.

Normally, this might be a very good thing, but for me...!

“For a Crimson Magic Clansman, it’s the greatest insult to steal someone else’s show! Don’t think this is over!!”

As I was shouting, I grabbed my staff and rushed out of the room—!

“Ugh!?”

“!?”

As I rushed out of the door, I nearly ran right into Cecily.

“Elder sister, sorry! The situation is urgent, I have to hurry!!

I'll leave first today!"

"Why are you hurrying? What happened that was so urgent?"

I didn't have time to explain to Cecily, but it was still rude to ignore her when she was right in front of me...!

I suppressed my urge to hurry and explained the situation. Cecily tilted her head.

"Uh. The party that went with Miss Megumin's friend to defeat the demon is led by someone called Rex, right?"

"? Yes, that's right. Supposedly, they are among the more powerful party in the city..."

Cecily listened and said.

"I healed them!"

She smiled prettily and gave a thumb-up.

"... Ah?"

"I healed those people! Look, I said yesterday I worked hard, right? I went to Eris Church to disturb them and saw those people moaning in pain."

What was this? I had a bad premonition.

"My faith in Lady Aqua was seemingly stronger than any Eris Cultist present. The power of the Eris Cultists couldn't heal those people enough for them to move. Before the Eris Cultists, I healed them to the point where they could fight if they endured the pain! At that time, the dissatisfied looks of those Eris Cultists were so awesome!!"

So she was responsible for complicating the situation!

Even Yunyun would not challenge the demon alone without a plan. But—

Except for Rex's party, other parties would refuse to challenge the demon even if Yunyun took the initiative to talk to them.

Even so, Cecily only healed the wounded, so I couldn't blame her for anything!

"I can't wait anymore. I must immediately...!"

At this moment, Cecily grabbed my hand as I was about to run off.

"Elder sister, I really don't have the time to play with you now..."

I looked at Cecily's expression and swallowed what I wanted to say.

She was mumbling something and looking at me seriously.

Finally—

"May the Goddess Aqua bless you! Blessing!"

A gentle glow came from Cecily's hand.

That glow engulfed my body...

"I only have a bit of impression for non-healing magic. It's great that I could cast it successfully."

Cecily smiled and breathed out in relief.

Looking at her expression, I could only smile stiffly.

Then, I silently thanked this weird elder sister from the Axis Cult.

In this urgent situation, I didn't notice that I was panicking.

Thanks to this, I was much more relaxed.

“Elder sis.”

“At this time, I wish you can call me Sis Cecily...”

I smiled stiffly again.

“Sis Cecily, I’m going.”

“Be safe!”

PART 9

In the plains outside of the city.

The Giant Toads that used to be hopping around were missing.

“We'll block it again! Please use the earlier magic one more time!!”

“Un-Understood! Leave it to me!”

At this time...

“Try blocking if you think you can! You trash are very annoying!!”

Yunyun and the others were in battle with the demon Hoost.

“Rex, stand back! You are at your limit!”

“Yes. Your right arm is broken, right!? Your face is pale!”

The situation was not good, but unexpectedly, Hoost was not without injuries.

After losing one wing to the magic sword hero, Hoost currently has minor wounds on its body.

And it gave the impression that it was weakened for some reasons.

“... Damn. Normally, I should be able to easily finish off trash like you people...”

Hoost threatened Terry and Sophie who replaced Rex in the

frontline, while it complained in a tired voice.

“Then, what should I do? Join the fight now...?”

After becoming invisibility with the magic scroll that deflected light, I watched the battle from a distance—

Seeing Hoost was not in a good form, I started to think victory might be possible.

I wanted to rush into battle, but it was probably better to observe for a while.

Or rather, this was not a good moment to debut as a Crimson Magic Clansman.

It was fine to come forth at a dangerous moment, but doing so when one's side was already winning was too lame.

At this time, Yunyun held out her staff in one hand and gripped a small rock tightly in the other.

“Lightning!”

She shouted in a resounding voice. The small rock in her hand disintegrated....!

“Ah! ... It hurts! This magic is so annoying! Damn. After losing almost half of my power, I don't really want to use too much magic power, but...!”

After being attacked by lightning, Hoost raised its arms up high—

“Go to hell! Inferno!”

It brought its arms down as it shouted!

But Yunyun seemed to be expecting this. She released her staff and opened a scroll with both hands towards it.

“Magic Canceller!”

The magic that was supposed to emerge from Hoost’s hands did not appear.

At the same time, the scroll before Yunyun turned black and was torn into pieces.

It seemed the magic in the scroll worked, cancelling Hoost’s magic.

Yunyun picked up the staff at her feet and took out a rock from her pocket.

The rock was a manatite.

This rock was filled with magic power, but its price depended on its size and purity.

Although various expensive magic items were used, Yunyun still managed to fight on par with Hoost.

“So annoying! That’s why I said I don’t want to deal with you Crimson Magic Clansmen!! Bastard, fight whichever you like! So troublesome. I’m going to use force!”

The enraged Hoost closed the distance with an agility that was mismatched with its huge body.

Noticing the situation, Sophie and Terry came in front of Yunyun to block it.

“Everyone, use Plan F!”

Yunyun shouted and retrieved a scroll in preparation.

“No problem here!”

“Okay, let’s do it!”

“I’m ready!”

That was probably a codeword for a battle plan that she and Rex agreed on.

““What is this again!? From the start, you have been playing all kinds of tricks. If you can do it, then...!”

Hoost charged forward without concern...!

At the same time, Rex and the others covered their faces.

As my eyes opened wide to see what they were up to—

“Flash!”

Following Yunyun’s voice, there was a bright flash of light!

“Ha! We demons do not see with our eyes! This body is just for temporary use. This trick is useless!!”

“D-Damn! ... Ugh!?”

“Sophie!? Ugh!!”

From the conversation, the two frontline fighters other than Rex had collapsed.

There were then two sounds of something falling on the ground.

“Damn. It had no effect!? I remembered hearing a soft cry of agony...!”

The evidence was Rex’s anguish suspicion.

By the way.

“—Ugh! —Ugh!!”

The soft cry of agony was probably referring to me as I rolled on the ground while covering my eyes.

I pressed my eyes which was injured by the light and squatted trembling on the ground.

“Okay. There are only the two of you left. Do you still have something else up your sleeve?”

I heard Hoost's arrogant voice.

I opened my eyes painfully and looked at Yunyun opposing Hoost directly.

Rex stood at her side, holding his great sword in his left hand.

The other two persons were on the ground. That guy named Terry or something was unconscious.

As if to answer Hoost's provocations, Yunyun quietly said to Rex.

“Mr. Rex. Although I don't know if it will be effective against a demon with high magic resistance... I still have one more magic item.”

“... I know. What should I do?”

What should I do? The mood had become even harder for me to debut.

Both of them endured the tense mood, then finally said something to each other that was too soft for me to hear.

“Oh. You still have tricks? Good, try it! If you attack, there will be a fault in your defense. If you fail, I wonder which of you will fall first!!”

Although Hoost mocked Yunyun, its yellow eyes showed signs of caution.

At this time, Yunyun took out a bottle—

“...? Magic Potion!!”

Hoost charged at Yunyun again as she drank the potion.

“The rest is up to you, little girl!”

Rex shouted and threw his great sword at Hoost.

“!?”

As if surprised by the enemy tossing away his weapon, Hoost was slow to react as its hardened arm blocked the great sword.

Then, it used its broad arm to smash Rex flying away.

“Paralyze—!!”

At the same time, Yunyun finished her potion and used a magic infused with all her magic power.

The magic she used was to temporarily paralyze an opponent.

But since demons used temporary bodies anyway, paralysis was—

“Ha! You are a Crimson Magic Clansman, yet you don’t know this! To demons, paralysis is...!?”

Hoost said in self-satisfaction and then stopped there.

“Paralysis is useless against demons. I know it very well! After all, my study results were Number 2 in class!”

The potion Yunyun drank was commonly known as Magic Potion.

Drinking it could increase the power of specific type of magic or directly change the magic's effect.

Since Hoost could not move, the magic was probably effective.

Yunyun didn't use this at the start because she was unsure if it would be effective.

But Yunyun won the gamble.

Then, it would be finished if someone deal the final blow to the paralyzed Hoost.

“Tsk. How powerful was that Magic Potion to be effective against me? But your magic power is almost depleted, right? Can you finish me off with your remaining magic power before the paralysis ends? A mere paralysis would last at most a few minutes. If its effect ends abruptly, the situation will suddenly turn in my favor.”

As if it realized it was in real danger, Hoost was suddenly very talkative.

“Let's negotiate. How about both sides retreat today? You want to treat those three people quickly too, right? If both sides are retreating, even when the paralysis ends, I guarantee that I won't attack anymore today. You may not believe me, but we demons definitely do not break our promises.”

But Yunyun did not answer as if she couldn't believe the demon.

Faced with her silence, Hoost became anxious and said.

"... Aren't you the second in class? Then you should learn that demons do not break promises and contracts!"

It shouted anxiously and angrily...

"..... That's not it."

At this time, Yunyun said softly while trembling.

By the way, Yunyun never moved from that spot since just now.

"That's not it? What's not it?"

Hoost asked in confusion.

"... Uh. The deal you mention... I can accept it. Uh, both sides will retreat today then. Uh..."

Yunyun said in a stuttering voice.

At this time...

"Hey. Wa-Wait..."

Rex said from the side.

"That's right. Forget about us..."

Terry joined in as he regained consciousness.

"... We are fine... Quick. Give it the final blow!"

As if those words were the final blow itself, even Sophie

urged her on.

... But I already understood Yunyun's current situation.

"Uh, I say...?"

They looked at the unmoving Yunyun.

"... Hey, you... Are you..."

Hoost also noticed it.

"Could it be that you are paralyzed as well?"

Its question resulted in an awkward silence.

Finally, only Hoost's laughter echoed across the plains.

"You... You Crimson Magic Clansmen. I'm not good at dealing with you people, but I really couldn't bring myself to hate you! How did you even managed to paralyze yourself!?"

Hoost said and laughed out loud. Yunyun replied on the verge of tears.

"I also don't know! I got that potion from the last magic item shop I visited. A beautiful elder sister said, 'This is a potion that will unspeakably enhance paralysis power in an area of effect.' She then sold it to me at a very cheap price!!"

Normally, I should scold her for doing such a foolish thing. But after looking at the bottle at her feet, I hugged my head uncontrollably.

The idiotic product that would drag its user down as well was probably created by my father.

"Ha. This joke is killing me. Then? What do you intend to do? I

say it again. Although I'm an untrustworthy demon to you, do you still want to make a deal or not? Look, I can't move now, is it okay not to give me the final blow? Since I had a good laugh, if you want to make a deal now, I can still leave you leave."

Hoost mocked her as it remained paralyzed.

Rex and the others were still rather imposing earlier, but after hearing that conversation, they couldn't say anything else.

—It was time.

“Ugh... I-Is that a challenge!? Cri-Crimson Magic Clansmen never back down from a fight! Even if I can't win, I will...?”

Yunyun stopped in mid-sentence while she was on the verge of tears.

“Ugh!? Wh-Wh-Where did you come from!?”

Hoost had the same reaction.

After dispelling the scroll's effect, I suddenly appeared. Its paralyzed body became even stiffer. It wore an expression of surprise.

“Everyone couldn't move anymore?”

It was so rude to leave me behind.

“Hi. I'm a passing arch wizard. You people stand aside. I'm going to have a good time.”

PART 10

“You-You are! The wizard who was all talk and no action! Hey. What arch wizard! What are you doing here? It’s dangerous, run!!”

As if his pain was numbed, Rex lay motionlessly on the ground and warned me anxiously.

“... Megumin?”

A frightful voice said.

As if she was a kid afraid of being lectured, the paralyzed Yunyun said and observed my mood.

I did not reply.

“Last night, I forgot my daily practice of using Explosion magic. When I was about to get out of bed, someone used Sleep magic on me...”

“!? You-You-You-You were awake!? Wait!? Were you awake the whole time!?”

I raised my staff before me and pointed at Hoost.

“Therefore, the magic power from yesterday was entirely wasted... I’m currently looking for a good target to use magic...”

“Hey, hey. You... That eye...! W-Wait. Okay, I understand. Calm down! Calm down slightly first!”

Hoost shouted at me in a stuttering voice.

“Megumin, please answer me!? When were you awake!? Last night, when did you start listening!?”

At the same time, Yunyun was shouting on the verge of tears.

“When did I start listening? Well, it was when the door was unlocked and you asked, ‘Megumin, are you asleep?’”

“Noooooooo! Ughhhhhh!”

Yunyun cried out in anguish as she blushed deeply.

She wanted to run away from here, but she couldn’t move since she was paralyzed.

“Next is— You dare to torture my amusing compatriot who made embarrassing confessions regardless of whether the other party was awake or not. She even managed to paralyze herself.”

“Stop it! Don’t say anymore! Don’t say anymore! I was wrong, please stop! You are angry because I came early to the fight after making you sleep!? Or because I took the doll!? I’m sorry, so please don’t say anymore!!”

“She is a shy girl who would say things like ‘I think the current Megumin is really cool, really powerful’ when she thinks nobody is listening...”

“Stop! Noooooooo!”

“And ‘Because you are my most important friend.’ ... Yes. After hearing her confessions, I cannot stand by and ignore this!!”

“Kill me! Since I’m paralyzed, I cannot run away or even kill

myself, so give me a quick clean death!! I can't live like this! Just kill me already!!"

Yunyun cried as she was about to have a mental breakdown.

For some reasons, Hoost was looking at us happily.

Then Rex, who remained silent all this while, shouted.

"Hey, wizard who is all talk and no action! How long are you going to keep fooling around? If you want to do something, quickly...? Wh-What is this? Hey, what is happening? Something is wrong!?"

In this situation, those words were unnecessary.

While I was making psychological attacks on Yunyun, I was also gathering magic power.

"My magic is a massive skill that requires charging. This situation is a match made in heaven for me."

"When you say charging, you mean you need to continue charging beyond this? Even though I have lived for a long time, this is still a rarely seen and frightening amount of magic power..."

Hoost said somewhat helplessly and yet slightly happily as well.

"Next is my finishing move, which is also the magic that defeated your comrade Anis."

"... I see. You defeated her. From the magnitude of this magic power, I don't think that fellow could have survived it either."

Perhaps because I didn't use magic yesterday, the amount of magic power emitted today was abnormally high.

The unrefined magic power spilled forth, causing the surrounding atmosphere to tremble slightly, accompanied by some static electricity.

“Wh-What is this... Hey, what is happening... I have been an adventurer for so many years, yet I have never seen this kind of magic...”

Rex mumbled to himself as he scanned the surrounding.

“What are you trying to do? Really. Aren’t you a wizard who is all talk and no action...?”

He then turned his pale face to me and asked timidly.

I didn’t respond. I merely smiled bitterly and said.

“This is it. My finishing move— Explosion magic!!”

Hearing Explosion magic, Hoost sighed deeply like a human.

... It was difficult to read the expression of a demon, but it was probably smiling bitterly too.

“Seriously... If I’m at my full health, I might be able to somehow endure this attack. If only I wasn’t assaulted by that ridiculously durable crusader and that thief yesterday.”

Hoost still couldn’t move—

“After that, I was pissed off about being injured, so I decided to attack the city... A weird woman who was repairing the city wall suddenly slapped me in the face with a vicious anti-demon magic...”

It grumbled as if it was making a confession.

“This means one less life then. My contract with Lady

Wolbach would also be forcefully broken. I would happily regain my freedom... I'm really impressed. In this way, I feel that one day that brat would really summon me back."

Then it happily said some strange things.

"..... Explosion——!!"

"Really. What is wrong with this city? It's full of weird people. They are all too unorthodox! Of course, as someone who uses Explosion magic, you are one of them too! What a day—!"

PART 11

Hoost was finally defeated, but after exhausting my magic power, nobody except Yunyun could move.

It seemed everyone else was brought back on stretchers by the guild staff. That pathetic incident happened yesterday.

And now—

“I always believe! Yes, I always believe in you, Miss Megumin! I always believe that you will win!!”

I was embraced by Cecily at the hotel entrance, letting her rub her cheek against mine.

How should I say this? Yunyun was still watching from the side. It was a bit embarrassing.

“Uh... Elder sister.”

“Call me Sis Cecily! Didn’t you already call me that yesterday!?”

“Elder sister. Uh, it’s very hot. Isn’t it about time you let go...?”

“Really. This kid is too coy!”

Cecily finally let go of me as she spoke such nonsensical words.

Then, she silently stared at my face and said with a laugh.

“But Miss Megumin, is this really okay? To give all the reward away...”

That's right. We gave the reward for defeating Hoost to Rex and the others.

Or rather, I was the one who lured Hoost to the forest near the city.

More accurately, it was the fur ball that was still pestering my feet at the present time.

“No problem. After all, I stole everyone’s thunder by dealing the final blow. After all, I wasn’t the one who fought that demon and was forced into that situation.”

“Miss Megumin is so cute when she forces herself like this even though she really want the money!”

“I-I’m not forcing myself! Really!? I just thought that Rex and the others were hurt because of me!”

“Really. You are not honest at all! But I don’t dislike that either!”

I smiled stiffly as Cecily hugged me enthusiastically again.

“... Okay. I’m a bit reluctant, but it’s about time I leave.”

Cecily said as she picked up the luggage on the ground and hung it over her shoulder.

“Are you going back to Alcanretia like this?”

Hearing my question, Cecily showed an expression as if she was kid plotting a prank.

“No. I’m on a new journey! I understand something from this incident. Healing magic alone isn’t enough! I learned healing magic only because I was frequently injured when I was messing about. This time, when I bless you like a real

priestess, I suddenly thought— A nickname like ‘powerful and beautiful priestess’ is better than a mere ‘beauty’.”

This was totally not important.

“And after reaching a certain level as a priest, I would be sent to a city of my preference to support and govern the local church!”

This was actually somewhat important.

“... Elder sister, are you planning to be sent to this city?”

“It’s a secret!”

... It seemed she was eyeing this place.

“In any case, don’t cry out of loneliness because I’m not around, okay?”

“I won’t... But I’ll still say this. Elder sister, take care. After all, you are a beautiful woman if you keep your mouth shut, so don’t let bad guys pester you.”

“That’s my line! Listen. Be careful when you choose a party!!”

Cecily said and left as suddenly as she came—

Then Yunyun, who was watching us so far, said seriously to me.

“Megumin. Can you come with me outside the city?”

—On the plains outside the city. The Giant Toads, which were hiding in fear of Hoost yesterday, were jumping vigorously all over the place.

The silhouettes of adventurers hunting the toads could be seen everywhere on the plains.

“Here should be fine.”

At this time, Yunyun, who was walking in front, stopped suddenly.

And—

“My good rival, self-proclaimed top wizard of Crimson Magic Clan. Megumin!”

Yunyun blushed and pointed at me.

“——My name is Yunyun! As an arch wizard who uses intermediate magic, I'll become the chief of Crimson Magic Clan! ... Next, I will begin my journey. Yes, a journey to defeat you, my rival. A journey to learn advanced magic!”

“..... You didn't call me rival yesterday— ‘Because you are my most important friend.’”

“Wah! I didn't hear that! I didn't hear that! I didn't hear that!”

Yunyun blushed as her eyes were filled with tears.

“..... Are you leaving on a journey to cool your head off because you said something embarrassing previously?”

“My brain isn't that damaged! Uh, uh. So-Somewhat... A... A little bit only... An-Anyway!”

She retrieved her staff and pointed it at me.

“When I learned advanced magic, we will have a real duel! ... I'm a bit upset, but Megumin was the one who defeated that demon in the end. I will admit I cannot win you for now. I feel

that it would be difficult to surpass you if I keep hanging around with you.”

“Forget about difficulty. From our duel records so far, I basically won all the matches.”

“So-So long-winded! I’m talking about something serious, so don’t interrupt! So how about it!? If I learned advanced magic, do you intend to have a proper duel with me!?”

Yunyun shouted loudly on the verge of tears.

I said to Yunyun.

“Fine. At that time, we’ll have a proper duel without tricks.”

I smiled to one of my few friends.



INTERLUDE: FINAL SCENE

—The One Who Would Become the Chief of Crimson Magic Clan!—

It had been two weeks since I bid Megumin farewell and left Axel.

During this time, I visited two cities, but I didn't find any adventuring companion.

... Actually, it didn't matter anymore that I couldn't find any companion.

Because as long as I had enough power, hunting monsters alone allowed me to gain levels faster.

And I was aiming to become the top wizard of Crimson Magic Clan.

Not merely to catch up to Megumin, but to surpass her.

To accomplish this, I was willing to take risks and fight powerful monsters.

So I had no time to look for companion anymore...!

I sat on the public carriage, which shook as it moved. I repeatedly tried to convince myself.

... What should I do? I was about to cry.

Goddess Lady Aqua. I'm very sorry that I lied. I really want some companions. I want reliable companions, preferably

humans— No. As long as we can converse, it doesn't matter if they are humans or not. I want companions that could adventure with me....!

At this time, I heard a voice next to me.

“Hey, are you okay? You have been shaking your head suspiciously. Are you unwell?”

It seemed I was so troubled that I unknowingly acted so strangely.

I shook my head at the worried elder sister who was talking to me.

“No-No problem. I’m just bothered by something! Sorry. I’m not a suspicious person.”

I said hurriedly as I felt my face heated up from embarrassment.

That elder sister smiled gently.

“Is it? From your appearance, you must be a traveling wizard. Don’t strain yourself too much, okay?”

The elder sister said and handed something over to me.

It was some packaged snacks.

“Uh, this...”

“This is very tasty. Have some?”

She smiled at my confusion.

“Th-Thank you very much.”

Snacks...

I remembered when I came to Axel with Megumin, I got some snacks on the public carriage too. It was the aunt who had a kid with her.

Those memories flashed across my mind as I took the snack.

“Oh. Your eyes... Are you a Crimson Magic Clansman?”

The elder sister removed her hood and looked at my eyes.

There was only yellow in her eyes. The elder sister had short red hair. She looked at my eyes in nostalgia.

“Ah, yes! I’m a Crimson Magic Clansman. Uh... My-My name...”

“It’s fine. You don’t need to say it if you are embarrassed! I know the names of Crimson Magic Clansmen are very special!”

The elder sister stopped me hurriedly as I was about to announce my name.

... What a kind person. I felt it was rare to meet a knowledgeable person. There were only two of us in the carriage. It seemed there were less passengers today.

“By the way, what is bothering you? If you don’t mind, you can talk to me about it.”

As I said “Itadakimasu!” and ate the snacks, the elder sister continued smiling.

“My trouble... Uh, it’s a bit embarrassing...”

I told her everything that happened so far, even though she

was a stranger.

The events involving how I left the Home of the Crimson Magic with a friend for Axel City.

Even with the most favorable qualities and conditions, I still couldn't find any companion.

I left my old friend behind and began my own journey in order to surpass her.

As the elder sister listened to my story, she closed her eyes.

After a while—

“... Is that so? I’m the same. My subordinates who were with me for a long time... They left this world one by one. Separation is really so painful.”

She said and smiled in a somewhat lonely look.

This elder sister must have experienced a lot.

“Uh... Restrain your grief...”

“Oh. Sorry, no problem. We merely parted our ways for a while. It isn’t as if I will never see them again... What do you intend to do next?”

“Me? I haven’t decided. Since I want to gain levels quickly, I should be going somewhere with more powerful monsters.”

The elder sister nodded in understanding.

“Then, do you want to travel with me? I’m going to visit the hot springs in a certain city. Sometimes, I travel with adventurers too. Despite how I look, I’m actually very strong.”

“Okay.”

I quickly agreed as I suppressed the urge to interrupt her. The elder sister was shocked.

“Is-Is that so? Uh... The city I’m planning to visit is Alcanretia...”

“Oh.”

Someone finally invited me to travel together, yet her destination had to be Alcanretia.

I didn’t think that I would return to the city with those people...

“What is it? Something wrong with Alcanretia?”

“Hm... That, uh... Actually, I stayed in that city for a while. I dragged into an incident involving the minions of the demon king’s army.”

The elder sister’s expression changed when she heard “demon king’s army”.

“Minions of the demon king’s army? ... But it is too early for the plans involving Alcanretia...”

She softly mumbled to herself.

“Then? What did the demon king’s army do in Alcanretia?”

“Uh, there was a terrorist attack to turn all the hot springs in the city into Tokoroten Slime...”

“Wh-What...!? Hey, are you sure this is the work of the demon king’s army? I-I have never heard of such a ridiculous terrorist activity.”

“Because after the incident, someone saw the silhouette of a female demon... So the Axis Cultists were certain that it was doubtlessly the work of the demon king’s army. They said, ‘Everything bad happening in this city is due to the demon king’s army’...”

“What does this mean!?”

The elder sister violently grabbed my shoulders. It was useless to complain to me.

“Uh. Anyway, that’s how it was. A lot of things happened, so I don’t really want to go to that city now... And, elder sister, please be careful. There are very strange people in that city.”

“I realized that from your statements earlier. Thanks.”

—Then the carriage slowed down and finally stopped.

“Unknowingly, we have arrived. Then let’s part here? I need to get on the carriage leaving for Alcanretia.”

The elder sister stood up and sighed without enthusiasm.

“Ah, that... I’m really sorry, even though you invited me. I have never been invited by others before. I-I will never forget this!”

“It-It’s fine to forget it! I just feel that your magic power is especially strong. You have a lot of potential, so I was rather interested in you! Don’t be too serious about this!”

The elder sister smiled anxiously.

“Then I’m leaving. Both training and making friends are very important. Be sure to work hard in both areas. Or else you would become the demon king, okay?”

She got off the carriage and waved at me.

After the elder sister left, the carriage started to move slowly again.

I put my face out of the window and waved to the elder sister. I engraved her words in my heard.

“Or else, you would become the demon king, okay?”

That was a famous story about the demon king.

It was a story about the lonely demon king with a very strange name.

The story about the powerful demon king was to avoid letting one's children become lonely like the demon king. If one was alone, that special power would be meaningless.

But no problem.

I still had that... How should I say it? Companion, or friend, or crony... Yes, that rival. I still had that rival.

—One day, I would surpass her and become the chief of Crimson Magic Clan....!

I watched the elder sister walk away and silently made my resolution. Then, I suddenly noticed something.

“I forgot to ask the elder sister's name!”

EPILOGUE

ロード



—My name is Megumin.

I was the top wizard of Crimson Magic Clan, a wizard that used Explosion magic.

I had driven off the evil god's minions and defeated two greater demons.

“Recruiting frontline jobs~ There are three open spots!”

“Any priest? This is a profitable job involving driving off goblins! One open spot!”

Someone like me was—

“Hungry. I'm starving...”

I was suffering from starvation.

Today, I was also in the corner of the Adventurer's Guild, waiting for someone to post a notice to recruit party members.

How did it become like this?

Even though I gave the reward from the Adventurer's Guild to Rex, the story of Hoost being defeated by me should be well-known to other adventurers.

Then why wasn't there an adventuring party that would recruit me?

Before Yunyun left, she gave me all the remaining expedition fund borrowed from Cecily. She forcefully pretended to be generous and called it a farewell gift.

No. Wrong.

At that time, I was overly optimistic, believing that as the person who defeated Hoost, every party would invite me and that I would make a lot of money.

In the end, it was like this.

“Hey. What are you doing here? Still haven’t found anyone to party with you?”

There was a voice above my head as I sprawled on the table.

I knew who it was without looking.

It was Rex.

“What? Your wounds are healed? And are you here to mock me? Are you picking a fight? I’m very hungry now, so I’m in a bad mood. If you are picking a fight, I will take you on. After all, it is in our nature as Crimson Magic Clansmen.”

“No, no, wrong! I won’t dare to pick a fight with you! Spare me. I didn’t mean it that way.”

Hearing my words as I sprawled on the table, Rex was scared out of his wits.

“... Hey, if no party wants you, why not join my party?”

He said in a tone as if he was inviting me for lunch...

I quickly raised my head and grabbed Rex’s belt.

“What did you just say!?”

“Uh! No. I’m just asking if you want to join my party. After all, my party is quite famous. I think someone like you, who could

use that powerful magic, would be useful.”

An elite team was inviting me to join!

“Elaborate! Tell me all about it!”

“Ah. Okay. Uh, how should I say this? For us, the monsters in this region are no longer worth the effort, so, uh...”

Rex pointed to the guild door with his thumb.

Sophie and Terry were there outside with their luggage.

.....

“We intend to move our base of operation to the war zone—that is, at the imperial capital. We think we could earn more there.”

This suggestion itself was very attractive.

“There are a lot of enemies there, and powerful ones at that. If you join, you would surely accomplish a lot, even if it was your one-use magic.”

When I thought about my own future, going with them to the imperial capital might be the correct choice.

“Imperial capital huh... Would I become a liability since my level is still low?”

I said as I let go of Rex’s belt.

“Ah? What are you saying? If you are considered a liability, then we are practically...!”

“And—”

I interrupted Rex's sentence.

"Can't you stay here for a while more? I'm starting to like this city."

I said and smiled.

"... What a strange fellow. But this city is full of weirdos, so I guess it suits you."

Rex said in amusement and smiled.

"Well, then we are leaving. I heard the demon king's army is becoming more active. We need to hurry to the imperial capital and make a name for ourselves."

He turned and left as he waved at me.

In a moment of mixed emotions, I watched him leave without knowing what to say— and suddenly came back to my senses.

Oh no. I shouldn't be stubborn at this time!

At least, I should have let him treat me to a meal...!

It was too late to regret.

I could only walk towards to the notice board.

The recruitment notices were probably still the same ones as before.

—Sigh. I was starving.

Now was not the time to be proud.

Should I pester a party that was currently recruiting until they

treat me to a meal— even if they reject me in the end.

—At this time, I discovered a notice that I had never seen before.

A recruitment notice that was limited to advanced jobs.

That was so demanding to make such a request in the city full of rookies. But luckily, I met this requirement.

I was very concerned about the notice saying, “The current party consists of a rude person with the weakest job and a super-beautiful and excellent arch priest.”

My bad premonitions were quite accurate.

The self-proclaimed beautiful and excellent arch priest reminded me of that person who left a few days ago.

But I was so hungry that I was almost reduced to a skeleton.

What kind of party was this...

—When I saw the duo that made up the recruiting party, I was stunned.

It was the strange duo that I frequently encountered.

Because the recruitment notice was too specific, nobody approached them until now.

“... Hey, there’s no need to be so demanding, right? Although recruiting high level members is necessary to defeat the demon king... but is it even possible to find such people in this place?”

The young man was right.

The watery blue-haired girl lazily sprawled on the table.

“Ugh... But, but...”

She seemed unwilling to compromise.

They should be the ones who posted that notice.

And this was the self-proclaimed beautiful and excellent arch priest.

... Arch priest?

Beautiful arch priest with watery blue hair?

I smiled deviously.

No wonder nobody in the city could find her, no matter how hard they tried.

Looking at the girl who sprawled lazily on the table, it was difficult for anyone to think of her as a beautiful arch priest.

However, I felt that if I joined them, it would be very difficult for me.

I didn't really have the right to say that, though.

“Nobody would come at this rate. Besides, you may have an advanced job, but I have the weakest one. If we recruit a bunch of elites, I won't even have the right to speak anymore... Let's lower the requirements a bit...”

Despite my bad premonitions, I continued to approach their table.

I had to pretend to be a cool wizard and greet them despite my weariness.

“About the recruitment for adventurers with advanced jobs, are you the ones who are recruiting?”

But I felt these two people...

When I saw them elsewhere, they seemed very playful.

I was probably a weirdo myself, so maybe it wasn’t bad to be with them.

—This was Axel, the City of Rookies.

This city was the starting point for me. I was merely passing by.

Yet I decided to stay on in this city.

The duo raised their heads to look at me dumbly. I valiantly flicked my cloak—!!

“—My name is Megumin! I’m an arch wizard who controls the strongest magic, Explosion magic...!”

-THE END-

ライン=シェイカー

リーン キース テイラー

ライズ ライナ アイン

ジャック トマス ロッド

レックス テリー ソフィ

御剣響夜

ホースト

アクア 佐藤和真

**SPECIAL
THANKS**

ダクネス

アクセルの街の皆さん

アクシズ教徒の皆さん

エリス教徒の皆さん

『この素晴らしい世界に爆焰を! 3
ふたりは最強!のターン』

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